

A PENGUIN SPECIAL

POLITICS MADE PLAIN

What the Next General Election
will Really be About

T. L. HORABIN

NINE



PENCE

About this book

WHAT are the issues which will face the British elector—soldier or civilian, man or woman—called upon to vote at the General Election which will follow on the end of the war? For ten years the country has had no opportunity of endorsing or condemning the record of a Tory-dominated "National Government": millions of young men and women will be recording a vote for the first time in their lives.

T. L. Horabin, Liberal M.P. for North Cornwall, tells in these pages the story of 25 years of Tory government. He shows how Tory policy led on the home front to the calamity of the General Strike in 1926, and to the economic disaster of 1931; and in foreign affairs to the humiliation of Munich and the crowning disaster of a World War for which the ruling groups had done nothing to prepare. He demonstrates how Tory rule has been directed to the support and strengthening of the social and economic privileges of a small select class at the expense of the "common people".

His object is not to rub salt into old wounds, but to show that only by the transference of power from the discredited Tory party to the people, represented by a combination of the parties of the Left—Liberal, Labour, Common Weal, and any others who can agree on a joint programme with them—can a Better Britain be brought about: a Britain in which the economics of scarcity will give way to the economics of plenty; in which security, equality, and liberty for all—high and low, rich and poor—will replace fear, privilege and repression.

G. H. Gannon

Trinity Hall

A PENGUIN SPECIAL

1945

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BY

T. L. HORABIN, M.P.

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TO MY CHILDREN
IVAN, JIM AND MARY

In the hope that their generation will seize the
"real power and property in the Government"

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PREFACE

UNDER the conditions of to-day a General Election is an elaborately staged emotional appeal that is over in a few short weeks. The real issues can be, and are often, completely masked. Democracy, which I would define as Government by the freely elected representatives of the people in the interests of the people, can never be achieved until the electorate is proof against the fraudulent stratagems of the ruling groups who have "the real power and property" in the Government of this country.

Politics has frequently been described by the ordinary citizen as a dirty game. The object of this book is to explain the game played by the Tory leaders between 1919 and 1944, in the hope that the common people, the men and women fighting in the Services and working in our factories and offices, including those who voted Tory between the Two World Wars, will take to heart the inescapable lesson to be learnt from the history of this period.

The common people make up 95 per cent. of the electorate. Ultimate political power is in their hands. They can return to power, if they insist on it, a Government pledged to govern this country in the interests of the people. They can, if they insist upon it, return a House of Commons at the next General Election pledged to make Britain a land fit for ordinary decent people to live in, by using the power of the State to provide social security, jobs for all, decent homes, and the end of war.

That we have hitherto enjoyed none of these things, all of which were possible in the period of twenty years between the two World Wars, is due to the inherent dishonesty of the Tory leaders. Scrupulously honest in their private lives no doubt these men were, but their public actions were and are fundamentally dishonest.

Why this should be so is readily understood if the real nature of politics is grasped. Although the political fight is in these days conducted as if it were a fight over the respective merits of conflicting policies all designed to secure the well-being of the people, this fight is an illusion and a sham, put up by the Tory leaders to delude the people into voting against their own interest. Politics up to now has been nothing more or less than a ruthless fight of sectional interests for power, and to hold on to

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power the sectional interests represented by the Tory leadership have to secure the votes of the people.

The only preoccupation of the Tory party from 1919 to 1944, except for a short period when Churchill first became Prime Minister, has been to preserve the privileges of wealth from encroachment by the people. To secure their end, the Tory leaders have misled the electorate, including the rank and file of the Tory party, and in doing so have descended to practices that can only be described as criminal in the political leaders of a parliamentary democracy. These men have sacrificed the national interest to the sectional interests they represent, and have practised an internationalism more subversive to the interests of their country than the internationalism of the Comintern, which they held up as a bogey for twenty fateful years.

My object in laying bare their misdeeds is not to drag their names in the mud, but to arm the electorate with knowledge so that they will not be misled at the next General Election.

This book is not intended to be an erudite treatise on British history. It is a simple, and even a simplified account of the basic facts and trends which the electorate must understand if they are to exercise their political judgment effectively at the coming General Election. If any of my readers wish to delve more deeply into the subject of this book, I would strongly recommend them to read two notable and fully documented books on the diplomatic history of the last ten years; *Europe on the Eve* and *Night Over Europe*, by Frederick L. Schuman, from which I have drawn much of the material used in my account of the foreign policies of Baldwin and Chamberlain.

A History of Anglo-Soviet Relations, by W. P. and Zelda K. Coates, and *The Tragedy of Ramsay MacDonald*, by L. MacNeill Weir, both of which I have used freely in the preparation of this book, should also be read as throwing significant light on this unsavoury period of British political history.

In the final chapter I state what I believe to be the only practical way by which at the next General Election the people can seize the "real power and property in the State" from the vested interests and use it to build a Britain fit for ordinary decent people to live in.

T. L. HORABIN.

25th June, 1944.

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SINCE the manuscript of this book was handed to the publishers we have gained tremendous victories in the West. Coming on top of the Russian victories during the summer, they would have meant final victory in any previous war. In spite of their hopeless position the German people show signs of steeling themselves to fight on in the face of obvious and utter defeat. This hardening of the will of the German people springs from the failure of our Tory-dominated Coalition Government to carry out effective political warfare side by side with our military effort.

True, the Nazi party must be exterminated. Effective measures must be taken to ensure and maintain German disarmament. But when these things are secured, the German people as a necessary step towards avoiding further war must be offered the prospect of reconstructing a community fit for ordinary decent Germans to live in, and of becoming good citizens of Europe.

To ensure a real peace for this country we must not only defeat and disarm Germany, but the British electorate must sweep the Tory party from office, so that its leaders may never again contribute to the building up of aggressive powers in Europe in order to further the sectional interests they represent. To protect these sectional interests against the spiritual and material forces which are arrayed against them and which make them an anachronism in the world of to-day, the Tory leaders must intrigue and play power politics of the most dangerous kind.

That they will do everything in their power to delude the people into voting for them once again is also inevitable, as will be seen from the history of the last twenty-five years. How they propose to do so is already clear.

In their Social Insurance White Paper the Tories disclose the bribe they intend to offer the people to return a Tory Government to power at the next General Election. That it is a bribe and not a genuine attempt to abolish poverty emerges not only from the scheme itself, but also from its timing. This emasculated Beveridge plan has taken nearly two years to bring out, yet it is almost identical with all the Government would agree to in

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early 1943 (see pages 90-93). These two years have enabled the "new" plan to come out just when a General Election is in sight. The principle of adjusting benefits to changes in the cost of living has been rejected, although poverty, as Beveridge said, cannot otherwise be abolished. Larger old age pensions are rightly to be paid, but instead of making them a charge on the Treasury, the extra cost is compensated by reducing children's allowances from the 8/- suggested by Beveridge to 5/-. The old people with votes are to get bigger pensions, but the children, who have no vote, get less than Beveridge advocated as being necessary on a subsistence basis.

The anti-social basis of Tory policy is indicated by this scaling down of children's allowances and the rejection of the marriage grant included by Beveridge. As E. F. Schumacher said in the *Observer*, this "is a further sign of preoccupation with age and death at the expense of youth and life". An aging population and a declining birth rate is the Tory answer to our post-war problem.

If the people who form 95 per cent. of the electorate wish to build a Britain fit for ordinary decent people to live in, they will take to heart the lessons of the last twenty-five years and will steel themselves against Tory bribes and blandishments. They will remember that the Tories believe in two fundamental principles—inequality and that wealth has privileges transcending the rights of the individual.

Every man and woman who stands for the dignity and well-being of the individual will vote for one or other of the progressive parties.

A progressive radically-minded House of Commons will bring into being a progressive radical Government, a Government working for life and youth and not old age and death.

If the people will it, work for it and vote for it, we can replace the spiritual sterility of the inter-war years by a spiritual resurgence in the years of peace that will resolve our common frustrations through the identification of the interests of the individual with the well-being of the community.

A Britain sustaining old age, and death for youth; or life and youth in a Britain fit to live in—this is the choice before us at the next General Election.

October 2nd, 1944.

CHAPTER I

THE BIRTH OF MODERN POLITICS

To understand the nature of the struggle for power, which will be the only real issue before the electorate at the next General Election, we must go back 150 years in history, to the French Revolution, when modern politics began. In 1789 the French masses revolted against the rule of the French aristocracy and destroyed it. This called in question everywhere in Europe the right of the landed aristocracies to rule in their own interest at the expense of the people. In Britain the French revolution released new spiritual forces which had a profound effect on contemporary British politics.

Britain in those days was governed by the landed aristocracy who composed the two political parties. Thomas Jefferson, who framed the American Declaration of Independence, said of the Government of England in 1810:

"In the first place, her King is a cypher; his only function being to name the oligarchy which is to govern her. . . . The real power and property in the Government is in the great aristocratical families of the nation. The nest of office being too small for all of them to cuddle into at once, the contest is eternal, which shall crowd the other out. For this purpose, they are divided into two parties, the Ins and the Outs, so equal in weight that a small matter turns the balance."

In sympathy with the revolutionary movement in France there was a growing consciousness in Britain of the right of ordinary people, whether they held property or not, to have some part in the election of the Government.

Side by side with this movement amongst the people, there was also a demand on the part of the growing body of industrialists for a share in the Government of the country. The industrial and commercial middle class increased greatly in prominence as a result of the Industrial Revolution. By developing the new technique of machine production they had acquired great wealth. Indeed, as a result of the Napoleonic wars, which

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filled their coffers and increased their importance in the economic life of the nation, their economic power became greater than that of the landed aristocracy. They demanded political power commensurate with their economic power. To further their agitation the industrial middle class made common cause with the masses. At last the landed aristocracy was forced to give way and the Reform Bill of 1832 was the result. By this measure the landed aristocracy compromised and surrendered the greater part of their power to the new industrial aristocracy. This new money aristocracy was as uninterested as the landed aristocracy in securing a share in political power for the people. In fact, they feared the people and were as concerned as the old land-owning oligarchy to protect the privileges of wealth from encroachment by them.

Thus, in spite of the agitation which culminated in the Chartist riots, the masses were left without any political weapon, except the threat to revolt. The right to elect Members of Parliament was still based on a property qualification. The idea that men and women had the right to vote because they were citizens, and not because they held property, was repugnant alike to the landed aristocracy and to the industrial aristocracy.

After the Reform Bill, the Tory party gradually transformed itself into the Conservative party, the principal aim of which was to protect the interests of the landed proprietors. The Whig party became the Liberal party, representing the interests of the rapidly growing industrial and commercial aristocracy. The Liberal party jealously defended the freedom of the subject, freedom of speech, of the press, and of assembly. Both parties were united in their determination to protect the privileges of wealth.

However, throughout the nineteenth century concessions were obtained by the people. The property qualification on which the right to vote was based was gradually lowered by the action of both parties when in power. Conditions of work were improved and other social reforms were instituted. These reforms were carried out both by the Liberal and the Tory parties, not so much for humanitarian reasons, but as a means of securing the support of the people in the conflicts between the landed and the industrial interests. Finally, in the period 1906 to 1914, with the Liberal party in power, the industrial interests repre-

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sented by that party set out to make the final assault upon the privileges of the landed aristocracy, by limiting the power of the House of Lords and setting out to deal with the land. In addition the radical element, which was always strong in the Liberal party, was led by David Lloyd George, an outstanding fighter, so a big step forward was also made in social reform. Old Age Pensions, and Health and Unemployment Insurance were introduced. At the end of the First World War, 1914-1918, wealth ceased to be the qualification upon which the right to vote was based. Both men and women were given the vote. In other words, ultimate political power was now in the hands of the masses. Their only task was to learn how to acquire "power and property in the Government", so as to make Britain fit for ordinary people to live in.

Between the two World Wars the people failed completely in this task. At the end of the First World War they possessed in a greater degree than ever before the means to use the power of the State to further their own interest. Despite this, during the twenty years between the two wars, Britain was governed more effectively in the interests of the privileges of wealth at the expense of the people than it was immediately before the First World War, when the political power of the people was less. That this is not an inevitable defect in democracy is evident from the later pages of this book.

During the First World War the people were told by their political leaders that they were fighting "the war to end war" and "the war to make the world safe for democracy". At the end of that war Germany was completely defeated. No great nation was ever weaker, and the Allies, Britain and France, were militarily overwhelmingly strong. Yet, twenty years later, a World War once again broke out. Germany was so powerful that she overran France and drove Britain out of Europe. Democratic government had disappeared from the continent of Europe and had been replaced by cruel despotism.

The returning soldiers were also told that they would come back to "homes fit for heroes to live in". In the intervening twenty years, instead of building and enjoying homes fit for heroes, the British people suffered mass unemployment which forced at times as many as three million workers on the dole and kept their families in destitution.

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into an attempt to create a scarcity of the types of skill they represented in order to secure good wages. The industrialists were, of course, more successful in their efforts than the trade unionists.

As the twentieth century advanced, these organisations restrictive of the free operation of the capitalist system, monopolies, cartels, trade organisations, trade unions, removed more and more of our economic activities from the area in which supply and demand were integrated or brought into balance by the freely operating price fixing mechanism, the compulsions of which were bankruptcy for the capitalist and starvation for the worker.

After the First World War there was a tremendous growth in monopolies in Britain. Many of the separate producing units of the chemical industry were amalgamated into Imperial Chemical Industries; the iron and steel industry controlled prices and production through the Iron and Steel Federation. Surplus shipbuilding capacity was bought up and ruthlessly destroyed by National Shipbuilding Securities Limited. This process also tended to oust the industrialist who understood production and was in close touch with his workers from the control of British industry, and to substitute for him the big financial men of the City of London, who engineered the amalgamations and ran the gigantic industrial organisations which they thus created, without reference to any humane or even purely industrial considerations, but entirely from the standpoint of what was financially desirable. They set out to restrict production in order not only to maintain selling prices and profits, but also to bring security to the existing capital structure.

Restricting production meant throwing workers out of employment. The more workers there were unemployed, the less could the community consume, with the result that production was further restricted and more workers were thrown out of employment.

Technological developments leading to increased output per worker, combined with these monopolistic practices, led to the chronic unemployment of the inter-war years. The following figures from a Memorandum privately circulated by Mr. Comyns Carr, K.C., show that output per head over all productive

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industry went up from 100 to 118.2 between 1924 and 1937. If Britain had set out to produce the output of 1937 at the rate per head of 1924, we should have needed in productive industry alone 1,429,000 more workers than were actually employed. This is more than twice the total number of registered unemployed in productive industry in 1937, and nearly equal to the total unemployed in all occupations.

	1924	1929	1930	1936	1937
Board of Trade Index No. of Production volume ..	100	111.8	103.2	108.6	127.2
No. employed (on Census of Production basis) (thousands)	7,298	7,496	7,141	7,153	7,854
No. required to produce the output of each year at 1924 rate per head (thousands)	7,298	8,145	7,531	7,926	9,283
Surplus	—	649	390	773	1,429
Index No. of output per head	100	108.6	105.4	110.8	118.2

Because of the failure to deal with this problem realistically, chronic mass unemployment with its attendant miseries for the workers and their families was the ugliest and most characteristic feature of the twenty years between the two World Wars.

The ruling groups in Britain, those sectional interests that held "the real power and property in the Government" might perhaps have solved the problem underlying the breakdown of the economic system had they been prepared to make the sacrifices necessary to do so. In the years immediately after the First World War the problem could have been tackled by deliberately abandoning monopolistic privileges to enable the competitive capitalist system to function effectively, and at the same time introducing sweeping social reforms and a policy of high wages to enable the people to absorb the increasing output of industry by means of a rising standard of living. The alternative would have been a planned economy based on democratic socialism.

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The immediate sacrifices, both material and emotional, demanded of the British ruling groups to carry through either solution were too great and the opportunity was lost. Indeed, these ruling groups were too terrified to pursue rational policies. They feared that, unless they adopted reactionary policies, they would lose their wealth, their privileges and their power.

Many factors helped to create and then to intensify the fear that increasingly gripped the British ruling groups after the First World War. First there were the radical, social and political reforms initiated by the Liberal administration under the radical leadership of David Lloyd George. Then there was the First World War. To read the account given by the leaders of both sides of how Europe drifted into the First World War is to obtain a shocking insight into their helplessness in the face of what they regarded as a hideous accident. International, economic and social organisation appeared to them to have grown too complicated to control. Amongst the British ruling groups there was a growing fear of the forces that were being unleashed. The foundations of our civilisation were being undermined, and with them would go the scarcely touched privileges of wealth.

Then came the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, when the Russian masses revolted and destroyed the wealthy and mighty of Russia. The rights of property, of money power and of birth were no longer sacred. At the same time, as a result of the Electoral Reform Act of 1918, the people in Britain were given the means of acquiring the "real power and property in the Government" and of using it to further their own interests at the expense of the ruling groups.

This fear of the British ruling groups dominated their foreign and internal policies alike throughout the period between the two wars. A significant development in this respect was the attitude taken towards the Bolsheviks. The British ruling groups held that the Russian revolutionary movement must be crushed so that the example of the Russian people should not infect the British people and lead them to interfere with the rights and privileges of their "betters". Therefore, immediately after the last war, Britain, in conjunction with France, took the lead in attempting to destroy revolutionary Russia by blockade, by support of the counter-revolutionary forces and by actual armed

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intervention at Archangel. However, as a result of the "Hands Off Russia" movement which brought to a focus the determination of the British masses to give the Russian people fair play, and of the failure to achieve military results, intervention gradually petered out.

CHAPTER II

CLEARING THE WAY FOR TORY DICTATORSHIP (1919-1931)

FEAR of the forces unleashed by the First World War and fear of the Russian Revolution healed the old antagonism between the landed aristocracy of birth and the money aristocracy which had dominated the political scene in Britain throughout the nineteenth century. The privileges of both were threatened by a common enemy, the unpropertied masses, who had the possibility of seizing the "real property and power in the Government" through the extension of the right to vote, and whose weapon for making this power effective seemed to be the rising Labour party.

The industrial aristocracy of money that had supported and financed the Liberal party tended to withdraw to the Tory party. With its record of radical reforms between 1906 and 1914, the Liberal party was not to be trusted as the defender of the privileges of wealth; whereas the Tory party had an impeccable record in this respect. Of course, the Liberal party was not entirely deserted by these elements—to abandon lifelong habits of loyalty to a party does not come easily to some men, and the merchant, shipping and similar groups had a vested interest in free trade, for which the Liberal party still stood—but it was seriously weakened.

The Liberal party was also weakened by losses in the other direction too. Powerful progressive elements transferred their allegiance to the Labour party, which appeared to be untainted by any admixture of those sectional interests which had made the fight for radical policies so difficult inside the Liberal party. Lord Haldane, for instance, said in 1925: "The mistake Tories and Whigs alike made was in failing to see that as the franchise was extended, and as education permeated further and further, it became vital for any political party which desired to remain effective to be in the closest contact with the people. Labour is the only party that has so far succeeded in giving this faith to its supporters." Nevertheless a strong radical element remained

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frustrated inside the Liberal party, because they did not feel that the Labour party could give them all they wanted to further the interests of the people.

The history of dissension inside the Liberal party between the two wars, when viewed against the broad background of history, is not so much a conflict of strongly individualist personalities, as a conflict of principles of which the warring personalities were the protagonists.

Before 1914 the Labour party was growing in numbers. In 1892 there were only three independent Labour members in the House of Commons. In 1906 there were 29. In 1910 there were 40. The Labour party entered the Lloyd George Coalition Government during the war, but the moment the war was over they withdrew. As a result, Labour was decisively beaten in the 1918 khaki election, in which nearly all supporters of the Lloyd George coalition were returned, whereas their opponents were reduced in numbers.

The Tory hierarchy, those responsible for evolving policies designed to protect the privileges of wealth, were not deluded by their victory over Labour. They realised that with Tories and Liberals in coalition, Labour was the real opposition, in spite of the position of the Asquithian Liberals, who were outside the coalition. Events would ultimately therefore make Labour the Government of the country. Moreover, although the Lloyd George Liberals were in coalition with them, the Tories could not trust them because their leader, Lloyd George, had led the radical attack on privilege between 1906 and 1914.

Tory long-term policy at the end of the First World War was therefore directed towards closing their own ranks by ejecting from the Government all those whose determination to defend the privileges of wealth was in doubt, and then transforming the British parliamentary system from a two-party system into a three-party system, with the defenders of privilege in one party, and the progressive forces divided into two parties, which they rightly hoped would fight each other and split the progressive vote.

They then set out to evolve a technique for maintaining themselves in power permanently under the conditions of a parliamentary democracy. The political history of Britain between the two wars, if we cut through the bewildering jungle of day

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to day events and get down to essentials, becomes a series of experiments by the sectional interests working through the Tory party, to maintain a permanent Tory majority in the House of Commons and to keep the Labour party out. Stated in more fundamental terms, their object was to evolve a technique whereby the privileges of wealth could be maintained intact and even increased at the expense of the people, when, through the extension of the franchise, the people had the power to put into office a Government pledged to rule in the interests of the people at the expense of the privileges of wealth. To persuade the people to vote against their own interest became the dominant motive in the evolution of Tory strategy and tactics.

If the Tory leaders and the sectional interests behind them had faced the realities of the situation and had been prepared to make the short-term material and emotional sacrifices necessary to secure long-term social, economic and political stability, their tenure of power between the two wars would have conferred definite benefits on the British people and on the rest of the world.

As I said earlier, to do this they had either to increase the purchasing power in the hands of the people and to remove the restraints of monopoly, which was leading to the breakdown of the competitive capitalist system; or they had to reorganise the economic system on the basis of democratic socialism. Either solution meant short-term sacrifice for strongly entrenched vested interests and they would not face them. As the progressive deterioration in the economic system led to increasing disruption in the social and political spheres, in order to keep in power, they ultimately resorted to courses that can only be described as criminal when practised by political leaders in a parliamentary democracy.

Let me say here that I do not accuse even a majority of the Tory rank and file, or even the Tory back benchers in the House of Commons, of realising what was happening. Some, no doubt, understood the fundamental aims of Tory policy, but most of them had their judgment and perspective hopelessly distorted by fears induced by the Bolshevik Revolution; by the political power accorded to the people at the end of the last war; and by the rise of the Labour party, in which they saw confirmation

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of their fears of the use to which the masses would put their political power. They genuinely confused what they thought was desirable from a sectional point of view with what was desirable from the point of view not only of the people, but the nation.

With the leaders it was different. The narrative which follows will show how they pursued an internationalism in defence of the privileges of wealth, which was more subversive to our national interests than the Communist international.

Poiled in their attempt to destroy Soviet Russia by military means, they set out to destroy her by doing all that was possible to undermine the Soviet economy, by refusing to trade with her, and when this failed they contributed towards the rebuilding of the military and economic strength of Germany under Hitler, so that Hitler could march to the East against the U.S.S.R.

At home they realised that they first had to destroy the industrial strength of Labour, of the effectiveness of which, as a political weapon, the Labour leaders had already shown themselves to be fully aware.

Early in 1919, in the course of an interview with Mr. Bonar Law in regard to Russia, the Chairman of a deputation from the T.U.C. and the Labour party had said:

"Supposing an unsatisfactory answer from you, Mr. Bonar Law, and we call a special conference, there is a very strong impression that it is almost inevitable that the conference would decide in favour of a general strike. A general strike, which, in the minds of the people who are supporting this movement, would not be a mere demonstration. If there is a general strike, it will be an actual strike, not a demonstration, with all that a strike entails."

Vernon Hartshorn, who was regarded by the Tories as a moderate man, and a defender of the parliamentary system, was believed to be expressing the views of the overwhelming masses of organised Labour when he said in an article in the *Observer* on June 8, 1919:

"It is absolutely useless for the critics of the Triple Alliance (National Union of Railwaymen, the Miners' Federation and the Transport Workers' Union) to point to the mere mechanism of the Parliamentary system and to argue that the mechanism alone shows that it is a system which is truly democratic.

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Parliamentary government depends not alone upon mechanism but upon the spirit in which it is worked. It is quite possible for so-called statesmen to be scrupulously observant of the mere forms of Parliamentarianism and yet at the same time to be false to the spirit and the fundamental principles of democracy. To guard against this particular form of treachery the workers have a perfect right to use their industrial power, whether through the Triple Alliance or any other kind of Labour organisation."

The first step towards preventing the Labour party from securing a majority of members in the House of Commons was taken in 1922, when the Tory party broke up the second Lloyd George coalition. Speaking at the Carlton Club, Bonar Law gave as his main reason for breaking the coalition the importance of preventing the Labour party becoming the only possible alternative Government. On his advice the Tory party ejected the Liberals from the Government in order to bring about a three-party system; whereby the probability of Labour becoming the Government of the country was reduced. Under the three-party system, the progressive vote would be split by triangular contests in the constituencies, thus allowing Tory members to be returned on minority votes. As a result, in the 1922 General Election, the Tory party secured 347 seats and 5,000,000 votes, whereas the Opposition parties secured only 268 seats, although 8,000,000 votes were cast for them.

On Bonar Law's death, in 1923, Baldwin became Tory Prime Minister. Baldwin believed he could not guide the country through the difficulties of the winter of 1924 unless he could introduce Protection. He was prevented from doing this by Bonar Law's undertaking not to introduce Protection without first consulting the electorate on the issue. Although he had an adequate majority, Baldwin honoured the pledge and went to the country to get a mandate for Protection. The Labour and Liberal parties also made the recognition of the Soviet Government an issue. The Tories were, of course, against this. Baldwin was decisively beaten. Against 258 Tories, there were 192 Labour members and 157 Asquithian Liberals in the new House of Commons. At this election the Liberal and Labour parties came to an arrangement. Only 52 seats were contested by both Liberal and Labour candidates. The Tories polled 75,000 fewer votes

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than in the previous election; Labour 250,000 more, and the Liberals 180,000 more. Because of the truce between the progressive parties the Tories lost 88 seats, Labour gained 47 and the Liberals 41.

The result of this election was of decisive importance in the development of Tory tactics. They concluded that honesty did not pay. They had gone to the country on a clear, honest statement of the policies they intended to pursue. They were beaten, and the lesson was taken to heart. Never again would the Tory party go to the country on a clearly defined Tory policy. Other means must be found for persuading the people to vote against their own interests.

The Labour party had not a clear majority in the new House of Commons. There was consternation amongst the sectional interests when the Asquithian Liberals decided to give Labour general support if it formed a Government.

The consternation seemed even more justified to those intent on protecting the privileges of wealth, when the Labour Government immediately proceeded to recognise the Soviet Government. A Soviet delegation came to London to negotiate a trade agreement. After many difficulties, agreement was reached, subject to approval by the House of Commons. It looked as if the Government would be defeated because the treaties were opposed not only by the Tories, but by the Liberal leaders as well, although many Liberal back benchers would have supported the treaties.

Before the question of the Russian treaties came to a head the Government was defeated on the Campbell case. The Campbell case was this: J. R. Campbell had published a subversive article in the *Workers' Weekly* for which he was prosecuted by Sir Patrick Hastings, the Labour Attorney General. Then the prosecution was withdrawn, and the Labour Cabinet was accused of withdrawing the prosecution under pressure from the Labour back benchers. In spite of Hastings' conclusive reply, the Labour Government was defeated and decided to go to the country.

This in itself was a weak platform for Labour to fight a General Election. In handling the Campbell case the Labour Government had shown ineptitude. Their strong card with the electorate was the Russian treaties. How to discredit recogni-

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tion of the Soviets was the Tory problem. If this policy was discredited, a Tory victory was assured.

On October 21st, eight days before polling day, the London correspondent of the *Manchester Evening News* wired his paper:

"There is a report here to which credence is attached that before polling day comes a bomb will burst and it will be connected with Zinoviev."

On October 24th the Foreign Office sent a protest to the Soviet chargé d'affaires enclosing what purported to be a copy of a letter from Zinoviev to the British Communist party, containing "instructions to work for the violent overthrow of existing institutions in this country, and for the subversion of His Majesty's Armed Forces".

The same afternoon, without consulting either MacDonald, as both Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary, who was in the country; Haldane, who was acting as Prime Minister in his absence; or Ponsonby, the Assistant Secretary for Foreign Affairs, the Foreign Office, in defiance of international usage, sent copies of this letter to the Press, and the bomb shell predicted by the *Manchester Evening News* burst. That the letter was a palpable forgery made no difference. The explanation was simple: the Foreign Office was staffed by representatives of the British ruling groups and was therefore bitterly antagonistic towards Russia. Moreover, it had already hampered and done its best to sabotage the Labour negotiations with the Soviets for a trade treaty.

MacDonald failed to repudiate the action of the Foreign Office and attack the Red Letter as a forgery. The Labour candidates were hamstrung. Labour representation was reduced from 191 to 151; the Liberal party which had precipitated the election was reduced from 159 to 40, and the Tories gained 152 seats.

At this election there was no arrangement between the progressive parties. As a result, the Tories, who obtained only 7,864,000 votes out of the 16,300,000 cast, or less than half the total poll, gained two-thirds of the seats. Labour, which secured one-third of the votes cast, had only a quarter of the seats, while the Liberals, with one-fifth of the votes, secured only one-fifteenth of the seats.

The Tory leaders had found an appeal which would split

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Liberals and Labour and would ensure the support of the people against a policy which the people wanted to see carried out. "The country in danger" is an appeal to which the people can always be relied on to respond, even at the expense of their own interests.

The Tory Government remained in office from 1924 to 1929. It used its power to safeguard the privileges of wealth. Its first step was to refuse to ratify the treaties with the Soviets. There was no improvement in relations with Russia throughout the period the Tory Government was in office. The determination of the British Government to find a cause for a rupture of diplomatic relations with the Soviets culminated in the Arcos Raid (1927).

Also Churchill, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, without consulting Parliament, fixed the value of the pound at its pre-war level. While the excuse was that to return the value of the pound to its pre-war level would prove to the world the financial stability of Britain, the effect was to increase the value of the existing capital structure. Creditors were enriched at the expense of debtors.

The next step was to attempt to reduce wages at least in proportion to the increased purchasing power of the pound. In order to do this it was necessary to undermine the strength of the Trade Union movement. Even more necessary was it to undermine the industrial strength of the masses, so that they could not use it for political purposes, as they obviously intended. For this purpose the moment they were completely prepared Baldwin and Churchill brought the General Strike to an issue.

The story of how they succeeded is worth recapitulating.

In 1925, MacQuisten, a Tory back bencher, brought in his Trade Union Bill, which was designed to destroy the political power of the Labour party by undermining its finances. Baldwin opposed the Bill, to which the Tory party was pledged, because in his view it was premature. The industrial weapon behind the Labour party could not be destroyed by sniping; it had to be annihilated in a pitched battle, fought under conditions that would make a Tory victory inevitable. So, in his speech in opposition to the Bill, Baldwin sought to give the impression that he was friendly to the Trade Unions and that the battle (which he intended to bring about on grounds of his own choosing) was not of his seeking!

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Speaking against MacQuisten's Bill, he said:

"We at any rate are not going to fire the first shot. We stand for peace. We stand for the removal of suspicion in the country. We want to create a new atmosphere—we stand for peace—although I know that there are those who work for different ends from most of us in this House, yet there are many in all ranks and all parties who will re-echo my prayer, 'Give peace in our time, O Lord'."

In the same year the coal owners served lock-out notices on the miners to bring about a reduction of wages. Baldwin realised that the miners would receive the support of the railwaymen and dockers and that not a ton of coal would be moved. This would bring the economic life of Britain quickly to a standstill, because the Tory Government had not prepared to defeat such a strike. The Government had not yet organised the means of defeating the people, so Baldwin paid a subsidy of £25 million to the coal owners to withdraw the lock-out notices.

The Government then set to work to perfect their arrangements for defeating a general strike and then to create the conditions that would compel the Trade Unions to declare the strike.

J. R. Clynes, in his *Memoirs*, says:

"Far from encouraging overtures for peace, they¹ first tacitly and then openly inspired preparations for a pitched battle. The more hot-headed of the Tories were going about in a great state of jubilation in the autumn of 1925, boasting that a fight was coming which would smash trade union power for ever. They welcomed it, knowing that the casualties in that fight would be drawn from the ranks of starving miners, not from among themselves. In September, *eight months before the General Strike*, the 'Organisation for the Maintenance of Supplies' opened its offices and began to enrol hundreds of members of what amounted to a sort of unofficial union of strike-breakers. Soon, it had enlisted 100,000 volunteers, who were prepared to undertake blackleg labour, to run trains, lorries, and public services in the event of a great strike on behalf of the miners."

When everything was ready the mine owners stated they would lock out the miners on May 1, 1926, unless they accepted longer hours and lower wages. The T.U.C. decided to call a general strike in support of the miners, and the General Council of the T.U.C. met Baldwin at Downing Street. Ultimately Lord

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Birkenhead, the Lord Chancellor, drew up a revised formula. Of this formula J. H. Thomas said: "Never mind what the miners or anyone else says, I, speaking for the T.U.C., accept it."

Baldwin reported the settlement to the Cabinet. It looked as if the attempt of the Government to force a General Strike would fail. At this moment word was brought to the Cabinet that the machine-men of the *Daily Mail* had refused to print the paper because it contained an article which implied that, while all those opposed to the strike were "for King and Country", the trade unionists were unpatriotic.

This was the opportunity to prevent the settlement and force the General Strike on the Trade Unions. Churchill and Birkenhead drew up an ultimatum to the T.U.C., which was meeting the miners' leaders near the Cabinet Room.

What happened was described by MacDonald in the House of Commons next day:

"Mr. Baldwin knew the mind of the representatives of the General Council. That is the first fact. He also knew that, at that moment, the General Council, having specially summoned the Miners' Executive, were in consultation with the Miners' Executive in a room practically next door to the room where the Cabinet was sitting. That is the second fact. Then the news of the *Daily Mail* incident appeared. There was never a question put to the people in the other room: 'Do you know anything about this?' 'Are you responsible for this?' 'What action do you propose to take in regard to it?' There was no approach made of one kind or another. But when they were busy working out this formula, which was the form of a substance, a letter was received which says: 'The whole thing is finished.' After the consternation on the receipt of this letter was over, my colleagues decided to send a deputation to the room next door where the Government representatives were sitting, asking really what this was all about and to explain the whole situation to them. When the deputation arrived at that room, they found the room locked and the whole place in darkness."

Churchill and Baldwin had had their way, the industrial power of the masses could be shattered and the privileges of wealth preserved from attack by the masses demanding the right to reasonable working conditions.

Having undermined the strength of the Trade Union move-

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ment, through the General Strike and the ensuing Trades Disputes Act, by which, though Trade Unions were not forbidden to subscribe to the Labour party, each member of a Trade Union who wished to subscribe to its political fund had to make a written request to do so, and which also under loosely drafted clauses made general and sympathetic strikes illegal, the Tory Government set out to worsen the conditions of the unemployed. By administrative means they deprived many unemployed of benefit on the grounds that they were "not genuinely seeking work", thus bringing them under the degradation of the means test. Work was not to be found. Although dividends were rising, there was little or no reduction of the number of unemployed. Employment was retarded by the internal deflation policy and by the external anti-Soviet policy of the Government.

The Baldwin Government carried on for its full term and then went to the country on its record and the slogan "Safety First".

At the General Election of 1929, 287 Labour members and 59 Liberals were returned; 296 Tories were returned and Liberal and Labour together enjoyed a clear majority.

The Labour party and the Liberals under the leadership of Lloyd George had fought the election on the issue of unemployment. Both parties had promised far-reaching economic measures to increase employment. The Labour Government was therefore assured of Liberal support for its measures for dealing with unemployment and for other measures of social reform.

One of its first steps was to resume diplomatic relations with Russia and to receive and appoint an Ambassador. Later, a commercial agreement was signed.

During the whole period propaganda was carried on by the Tory party, the Tory press and the sectional interests behind the Tory party to end any relations with the Soviets.

Weaknesses in the Labour leadership, which will be considered later, contributed towards the collapse of the Labour Government in less than two years, but the intrigue of the sectional interests to exaggerate an internal financial crisis with which to frighten the people into returning a Tory Government, and at the same time discrediting Labour, was the prime cause. After some preliminaries in other parts of the world, the world financial crisis began on Wall Street in 1929 and quickly spread throughout the world, with the exception of Russia. As a result of the

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financial crisis, unemployment rose rapidly in 1930 and reached an intolerable level in 1931. While the Labour Government was attacked by its own supporters for failing to cope with unemployment, it was blamed by the Tories for causing the depression through lavish expenditure and administrative ineptitude.

The narrow sectional interests that dominated the Tory party wanted a Government of which they had full control to meet the world financial crisis. They also saw an opportunity of bringing the Labour party into disrepute and thus destroying the effectiveness of the political weapon of the people. This they achieved by getting MacDonald and Snowden, who was Chancellor of the Exchequer, to appoint a committee of their political opponents, the May Economy Committee, to pass judgment on their financial policy. The May Committee produced an alarmist and grossly exaggerated report on the state of the national finances, intended to discredit the Labour Government and in effect leading to a run on the pound.

From their experience in the 1924 General Election, when they were defeated on the questions of protection and recognising the Soviet Government, and in the 1929 General Election, when they were defeated on their policy of protecting the privileges of wealth at the expense of the wage-earning masses and the unemployed, the Tories knew that they could not return to power for any but short periods unless they could identify Labour and Liberal leaders with their policies.

Their solution was to foster and accentuate the financial crisis and intrigue with MacDonald and Snowden for a Council of State on the grounds that the country was in danger. MacDonald obtained the King's consent to the dismissal of the Labour Government and to the formation of a National Government of Labour, Tories and Liberals, with Baldwin as Deputy Prime Minister.

Thus, a Government of personalities was formed, composed of MacDonald and Snowden and the Liberal and Tory leaders. Lloyd George, when visited on his sick bed by MacDonald, refused to take part. The overwhelming majority of the Labour party went into opposition. The understanding was that, as soon as finances had been stabilised, the National Government would be broken up and party politics resumed.

The National Government proceeded to deal with the artificially induced internal financial crisis in two years. It carried

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an Economy Act which cut the salaries of civil servants as well as the pay of unemployed workers. It also carried an emergency budget which imposed heavy new taxation, including an additional 6d. on the income tax.

Exactly four weeks after the formation of the National Government, it abandoned the Gold Standard, which it had been allegedly formed to maintain.

The Tories were also anxious to introduce protection and take advantage of the discredit of the Labour party while the country was still victim of the panic that had been induced. To go to the country on the issue of protection was, from the experience of 1924, just suicide. Moreover, it would split the National Government, as important sections of the Liberal party would never agree. The façade provided by a National Government was of vital importance in deluding the electorate, who could be relied upon to respond to a patriotic appeal, where they would decisively reject clearly stated Tory policies.

Baldwin succeeded in persuading MacDonald and the Liberals in the Government to go to the country to secure "a doctor's mandate" to do whatever was necessary to restore the country's financial stability without specifying definite policies.

To make the assurance of a Tory victory doubly sure, the ridiculous story that Post-Office savings would be in jeopardy if the Labour party was returned to power was put about.

The suggestion was that a substantial part of the assets of the Post Office Savings Bank had already been lent to the Insurance Fund, and it was hinted that depositors in the Post Office Savings Bank were in danger of losing their money unless they voted for the National Government. These loans, as was well known to anyone in official circles, were borrowed by the Treasury on the Consolidated Fund in the normal way, and the deposits were absolutely safe. Snowden carried on with the stunt, which was used on every Tory platform and in the press to frighten the working classes to vote for Tories in order to protect their savings.

Baldwin insisted that Protection was not an issue in the Election. Yet every Tory candidate put tariffs in the forefront of his address. Snowden asserted that the Tory leaders were too honourable, if they won a majority, to impose tariffs, and so persuaded free traders to give their vote to the Tory candidates.

CHAPTER III

THE TORY DICTATORSHIP

(1931-1940)

WITH parliamentary opposition virtually destroyed and wholly demoralised the leadership of the Tory party became a dictatorship able to carry out the policies which they believed to be necessary in order to protect the privileges of wealth against encroachment by the people. As a result of the General Strike and the Trades Disputes Act they had already blunted the industrial weapon which the people might have used against the sectional interests. By their manipulation of the financial crisis of 1931 they had produced a political situation in which, under the cloak of the support of MacDonald and Snowden and the Liberals, they were able to go to the country as a National party to demand a doctor's mandate without any specific programme which would have betrayed their objectives and lost them votes.

They now had the parliamentary power to achieve their objectives which were antagonistic to the wishes and the well-being of the people. Those objectives were set for them by the financial and other sectional interests which dominated the inner circle of the Tory leadership. These objectives were unrealised even by many of the Tory back benchers who agreed wholeheartedly to the steps necessary to attain them, because those steps coincided with their view of what was necessary to keep the "lower orders" in their place and make the world safe for wealth and birth, the privileges of which were threatened by the Bolshevik example.

In formulating the objectives of the sectional interests, the policies to achieve them and the tactics to translate them into action, the sectional interests were led by three remarkable men: Montagu Norman (the Governor of the Bank of England), Baldwin, and Neville Chamberlain. Montagu Norman, who dominated the situation, was the most remarkable of the three.

Montagu Norman became Governor of the Bank of England in 1920. In the hands of a man of strong beliefs and powerful

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personality the Governorship of the Bank of England is a key position in which he can wield almost unfettered power. Although before the present war it directed Britain's entire financial policy and sometimes that of the whole world, the Bank is not responsible to the British Government nor to Parliament. While its directors are theoretically responsible to the stockholders, in fact they are a self-perpetuating body over whom the stockholders exercise no control. The Bank is governed by a court of directors, but a strong Governor, like Montagu Norman, wields absolute authority.

Montagu Norman is a man of strong beliefs. To him the sanctity of wealth must at all costs be preserved against the social forces unleashed by the First World War which threatened the very foundations of our money civilisation.

When after the last war Bonar Law sent Baldwin to the U.S.A. on a mission to discuss, but not to settle, the American debt, Montagu Norman, it was discovered later, accompanied him. Baldwin went far beyond his mission by not only negotiating, but actually acknowledging the entire debt.

That Norman believed that a high standard of living is bad for a people seems fairly clear from a conversation between another banker and Norman reported by John Gunther in his book, *Inside Europe*. He writes:

"Once amiably chatting with a banker friend, he listened imperviously to the argument that the gold standard will impoverish Britain in the long run. 'Tell me,' Norman asked, 'do you think it is better to be rich than to be poor?' His friend replied: 'Well, I have been poor, and now I am fairly rich, and I hope to be richer.' Norman replied that he was not sure, but that countries which were too rich went to pieces; he pointed to the example of Periclean Athens and Imperial Rome."

Of the part he played in creating the financial panic which destroyed the Labour Government in 1931, L. MacNeill Weir, who was in a special position to know because he was MacDonald's Parliamentary Private Secretary at that time, says:

"Everything was working according to plan, when a weapon was put into the hands of the Prime Minister which was as miraculous as the sword Excalibur. The agent who put this deadly blade into MacDonald's hand was Mr. Montagu

Norman, Governor of the Bank of England. Besides being a financier Mr. Norman is by way of being a politician. Indeed, it would seem that his chief preoccupations are with the political reactions of banking policy. He is a strong and interesting personality, somewhat theatrical in conduct as in dress; he indulges in ostentatious aloofness and melodramatic showmanship. His influence over successive Chancellors of the Exchequer has been enormous. He would fain play the role of financial dictator, and he ruled not only the Bank of England, but the Treasury, with a rod of iron.

"As neither MacDonald nor Snowden was an expert in finance, both having publicly declared their ignorance, neither was able to resist the dictation in financial matters of the Governor of the Bank of England. It is as a politician that Mr. Norman enters this story. He is obsessed with hostility to Socialism and the Labour party. As he stood for the orthodox Conservative policy of economy, etc., he naturally believed that every moment a Labour Government remained in office was a calamity for the country. The May report was as much his policy as if he had written it himself. Immediately on its publication he formed a Committee of Bankers to draw up a series of demands to be presented to the Labour Government, based on the findings of the Economy Committee. This ultimatum they presented to the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

"As Mr. Norman had been in close touch with the Prime Minister for some weeks, he knew well what the attitude of the Labour Cabinet would be. Not only did he know, but he had prepared for it. He informed the Premier that the supplies duly voted by the Commons for administrative services would not be forthcoming. He intimated that the gold stock in the Bank of England was becoming exhausted and a loan could not be raised abroad, unless on terms which, strange to say, practically coincided with the Bankers' demands. Now, as about £12,000,000 was required every Friday for Unemployment Benefit alone, this intimation that the stock was running short created dismay. After the Governor of the Bank of England brought the tremendous tidings of the impending crash, he went on holiday across the Atlantic."

The trusted political collaborator of Norman in the carrying out of his policies was Baldwin. Baldwin had already proved in the way in which he handled the General Strike his capacity

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in the art by which sectional interests maintain themselves in power under conditions of mass politics. He carefully cultivated the impression that he was a simple home-loving Englishman devoted to his pipe and his pigs. Yet he used speeches and conversations to hide and not to disclose the policies he was pursuing.

The first step taken by the Tory Dictatorship on the path towards removing all threats to the privileges of wealth and making them impregnable was to close the home market so as to rationalise and stabilise industrial production through restricted production, high costs, and the elimination of internal as well as external competition. By these means it was hoped to preserve the existing capital structure intact.

This was achieved by the introduction of Protection in spite of all promises. Throughout the period of the Tory Dictatorship, until the outbreak of the Second World War, advantage was taken of freedom from foreign competition in the home market to reduce internal competition. The steel industry was, for instance, reorganised on a monopolistic, non-competitive basis. The National Shipbuilding Securities Limited was formed with the active assistance of the Bank of England to maintain the selling price of new ships by destroying redundant shipbuilding capacity. As a result in this war our shipbuilding capacity is less than in the last war. Thus the sectional interests were protected at the expense of the national interest.

A policy of restricted production meant that there would be a substantial permanent body of unemployed. It was important to maintain a substantial body of unemployed in order to prevent Labour securing higher wages. The maintenance of a substantial body of unemployed is an expensive business and the cost must therefore be kept down to the minimum if it is not to interfere unduly with the profits of industry. The first National Government had already reduced the standard rate of benefit by 10 per cent. and increased the contributions, especially those paid by the workers. The period for which benefit might be drawn was reduced from 74 to 26 weeks. For uninsured workers a Means Test was introduced, and deductions on this account were to be assessed by the Public Assistance Committees, which meant that for the first time this kind of unemployment assistance was to be associated with poor law relief. The Tory Dictatorship

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went one better. It formed the Unemployment Assistance Board, which was only required to report to Parliament once a year, and after many delays and difficulties introduced the family or household means test, whereby the resources not merely of the recipient, but of all members of the household, were taken into account in assessing the needs of the unemployed.

The masses were hit in another way. Protection automatically increased indirect taxation. Indirect taxation is borne mainly by the masses. After 1934 when Chamberlain, Chancellor of the Exchequer, removed the increase in income tax imposed in 1931, and restored the cuts in salaries and unemployment allowances, the taxation of the well-to-do showed virtually no increase, but taxation on the masses showed a substantial increase. The share of taxation borne by those with an income of less than £250 a year in 1924-1926 was 28.6 per cent. of the total; in 1935-1936 it had risen to 33 per cent.

At the Ottawa Conference in 1932 agreement was also reached with the Dominions to establish Empire preference, and thus began the process of bringing about a closed Empire economy. Following on the Ottawa Agreement, the British Government denounced the commercial agreement with the Soviet Union. A new trading agreement was not signed until 1934.

In the field of foreign policy the Tory Dictatorship had two objectives in view to achieve its grand design of safeguarding the privileges of wealth. It wished to destroy Soviet Russia as the symbol of revolution, and it was determined to create impregnable barriers in Europe against the spread of revolution across the western border of Soviet Russia.

The view which lies behind Tory policy both towards Germany and Japan was clearly stated by Lord D'Abernon, who was the chief post-Versailles British envoy in Berlin, in his book, *The Diary of an Ambassador: Versailles to Rapallo, 1920-1922*:

"It was apparent to those who took a world view that Western civilisation was menaced by an external danger which, coming into being during the war, threatened a cataclysm equalled only by the fall of the Roman Empire. This danger arose from the sweeping success in 1917 of the revolution against the Czarist régime and the establishment in Russia of a fanatical Communist Government, animated by hatred of all political organisations which stood in the way of a world

victory of the Soviet creed. . . . Public opinion both in France and Germany was so concentrated upon the Rhine frontier questions that it relegated the vastly more important problem of the defence of Europe against Asiatic communism to the category of the non-urgent. And yet there is little doubt that a blind persistence in the policy of maintaining the war grouping of the Allies against Germany would eventually have led to Germany being forced into close alliance with Russia. . . . An Asiatic revolt under German direction against established institutions and supported by German industry and science may be considered an unnatural combination. But were it to come into being, the danger to European civilisation would be dire in the extreme. . . . On broad grounds of European interest the case was strong (for the Locarno policy of peace in the West and a free hand for the Reich in the East) for all nations who regarded Western civilisation as a precious heritage. It was even stronger when judged from the special standpoint of the British Empire. Apart from the general danger resulting from the spread of communism, the anti-English bias in Russia throughout the nineteenth century had to be borne in mind. The pressure of Bolshevik propaganda in combination with the traditional political hostility might create a force of huge potentiality. Resistance to communistic propaganda, the maintenance of peace in Europe, the avoidance of another Great War, the establishment for security for respective frontiers, the preservation of society on existing lines, were capital objects of British policy. But there was more than this. England's stupendous and vital interests in Asia were menaced by a danger graver than any which existed in the time of the old Imperialistic régime in Russia. Hostility to England or jealousy of the intrusion of British civilisation into Asia were indeed of old standing. For the last seventy years of the nineteenth century, rivalry between England and Russia had been a dominant fact in history. But the Bolsheviks disposed of two weapons which Imperial Russia lacked—class-revolt propaganda, appealing to the proletariat of the world, and the quasi-religious fanaticism of Lenin, which infused a vigour and zeal unknown to the officials and emissaries of the Czar. In the presence of the menace of such forces no solution of the European problem could be tolerated by English statesmen which threatened the exclusion of Germany from the European combination and left her a prey to Russian wiles and Russian influence. . . . Communism had already shown its power over French troops at Odessa in 1919. . . . Such were some

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of the arguments which from the first made reflective men sceptical of any permanent benefit to Europe or to England from the policy of pure compulsion against Germany."

This view led the Tory Dictatorship to regard the Italy of Mussolini, the Japan of Hirohito, and later the Germany of Hitler, as far less of a threat to the Empire than Bolshevik Russia. They went further. While Mussolini was to be kept in power to avoid the possibility of a Communist Italy, the growth of the economic and military strength of Hitlerite Germany and of Japan was to be encouraged to enable them to attack Soviet Russia and carve out from within the Soviet borders empires for themselves. To achieve these ends the Tory Dictatorship did not hesitate to abandon the traditional policy of the balance of power in Europe and to give Japan a free hand in China. For the same reasons they sabotaged collective security, which was the only alternative safe policy for Britain. The League of Nations could have functioned effectively had the Tory Dictatorship willed it. To accept the version that the League of Nations could not function because the United States had refused to accept the responsibility of membership is sheer evasion. When the Tory Dictatorship took office in 1931, Britain and France were economically and militarily overwhelmingly strong. Germany was economically and militarily weaker than any great nation had ever been in modern times. That Nazi Germany became militarily so overwhelmingly strong during the Tory Dictatorship that in 1939-40 she could conquer the whole of Europe, was due to the fact that the Tory Dictatorship up to 1939 was in favour of strengthening Germany.

In carrying out this design the Tory Dictatorship had two factors to contend with. The British people stood overwhelmingly behind the League of Nations and against the Fascist powers. Successive acts of policy designed to destroy the League and build up Japan, Germany and Italy had to be carried out and presented in such a way that British public opinion should become confused and its tremendous power to check unacceptable policies frustrated. The second factor the Tory Dictatorship had to contend with was France. The French ruling groups were also bitterly anti-Soviet, but against their fear of the Soviets and the spread of revolution to Europe was to be set another motive. They feared no less the danger of a strong Germany

on the other side of the Rhine. How to persuade the French to accept a strong Germany and to pull down their protective alliance with Germany's Eastern neighbours was a major problem of Tory foreign policy, but in this too they succeeded only too well.

When I fought a successful and bitterly contested by-election in North Cornwall in June and July 1939, I stated in reply to a question that Chamberlain had done more harm to the world than Hitler. The events which I am about to describe show that, while Hitler and the Nazis have a responsibility for this war for which they must be exterminated, the Tory Dictatorship is responsible for letting the mad bull loose on the world for which they stand convicted and for which they must be dealt with by the people.

The first step in carrying out their policy was taken by the Tory Dictatorship at the General Disarmament Conference in 1932. The General Disarmament Conference was doomed to failure because of the acquiescence on the part of the British Government in the Japanese acts of aggression in Manchuria. Disarmament depended upon security. Security depended upon the League of Nations dealing promptly and effectively with any act of aggression. The opportunity for Britain to give a lead by acting against the aggressor Japan was particularly favourable. On the 9th February Stimson, the United States Secretary of State, told the British Ambassador that the United States was ready not only to support collective pressure on Japan, but to take the lead in organising it. Sir John Simon, the British Foreign Secretary, wanted to say no, but he dared not because it would have so irritated the British people that he would have been forced from office. Stimson in his book, *The Far Eastern Crisis*, says:

"I finally became convinced from his (Simon's) attitude in these conversations that for reasons satisfactory to it, and which I certainly had no desire to inquire into or criticise, the British Government felt reluctant to join in such a *démarche*. I therefore pressed it no further. The British nonjoinder obviously killed the possibility of any such *démarche*. . . . My plan was therefore blocked. . . . For several days I was deeply discouraged at my inability to carry out the co-operative plan which we had suggested. I seemed

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doomed to inaction, while a great tragedy was following its predestined course."

Baldwin, MacDonald the Tory stooge, and Simon opposed League sanctions and American co-operation against Japan because they wished Japan to turn north against Russia, and thought in this way to avoid the threat to the British Empire that would arise if Japan turned south.

In December, following the establishment of Japanese Manchukuo out of the Chinese invaded territories, Simon so ably put the case for Japanese aggression in company with the German and Italian delegates that Matsuoka thanked him, saying Simon "had said in half an hour, in a few well-chosen phrases, what he—the Japanese delegate—had been trying to say in his bad English for the last ten days".

The first step had been taken in removing all opposition to the aggressive march of Mussolini, Hirohito and Hitler towards world domination, and the responsibility rested alone upon the inner circle of the Tory Dictatorship, Simon being a Liberal only in name and having become a member of the Tory clique.

The Disarmament Conference reached a deadlock, all proposals for effective security broke down for the reasons obvious from the British handling of the Manchukuo question.

Led by the British Government, each delegation wanted to retain those armaments of most use to itself. For instance, Britain wanted to abolish bombing in Europe, but to use it on the Indian border. Lord Londonderry, then British Air Minister, said in 1935 that he

"had the utmost difficulty at that time, amid the public outcry, in preserving the use of the bombing airplane, even on the frontiers of the Middle East and India, where it is only owing to the presence of the Air Forces that we have controlled these territories without the old and heavy cost of blood and treasure."

In a letter to his wife in March 1933, since published in *Ourselves and Germany*, Londonderry let the cat out of the bag:

"It is no use complaining about the Disarmament Conference; the thing is to get it out of the way without the world being defied by Germany and a war initiated by the Little Entente as a war of prevention. That is the real danger now. The Little Entente are fairly strong and Germany is weak.

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If Germany rearms the Little Entente's chances of security will seem to them to be diminishing. . . . The great difficulty now is not so much the acquisitive States—I mean those who were despoiled by the Treaty, although their case is hard enough—but the States which have acquired territorial extensions and are unwilling to cede anything."

The Committee of the Disarmament Conference on Security Questions produced a definition of aggression based on a previous Soviet proposal:

"An aggressor was defined as 'that State which is the first to commit any of the following actions: (1) declaration of war on another State; (2) invasion by its armed forces, with or without declaration of war, on the territory of another State; (3) attack by its land, naval, or air forces, with or without declaration of war, on the territory, vessels or aircraft of another State; (4) naval blockade of the coasts or ports of another State; (5) provision of support to armed bands formed in its territory which have invaded the territory of another State, or refusal, notwithstanding the request of the invaded State, to take in its own territory all the measures in its power to deprive those bands of all assistance or protection.'

"The Committee report stipulated that 'no political, military, economic or other considerations' could 'serve as an excuse or justification' for aggression and enumerated the 'principal cases in which States might have thought themselves authorised to resort to measures of force against another State under international law as it existed previously to the Pact of Paris and to the Covenant of the League of Nations'."

Here was the basis of a real disarmament agreement which would have led to World Peace. Russia and France supported it. Italy and Germany opposed, and Anthony Eden, as spokesman for the Tory Dictatorship, desired with Germany and Italy "a less rigid definition" of aggression. So the way was cleared for German rearmament.

On October 14th, 1933, Germany withdrew from the Disarmament Conference and began to rearm. On March 6th, 1934, the Belgian Prime Minister placed the responsibility squarely on British shoulders when he told the Belgian Senate:

"It is certain that at least two of the Great Powers which have a permanent seat on the Council, Britain and Italy, will

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refuse to order an investigation. Under these conditions, Germany will refuse to permit it. . . . There remains only the second means: a preventive war. . . . To prevent the rearmament of Germany there is no other means than immediate war. For myself, I refuse to throw my country into such an adventure."

The reason for the refusal of the Tory Dictatorship to oppose rearmament is clear and inescapable. Hitler had come into power on January 30th, 1933, because the big industrialists, financiers and the Junkers of Germany backed him. The leadership of Germany was now in hands which the Tory Dictatorship mistakenly felt they could trust to protect the privileges of wealth against attack by the people. Germany indeed might become the instrument for destroying the Soviets. Therefore Nazi Germany must not be prevented from rearming. This policy could not be openly stated because the British people in whose hands rested ultimate political power genuinely and passionately desired to take all necessary steps towards ending war. But the Tory Dictatorship was skilled in the Hitler technique for securing the acquiescence of the people in policies which were against their interests—"the primitive simplicity of the minds of the masses renders them a more easy prey to a big lie than a small one, for they themselves often tell little lies, but would be ashamed to tell big ones. They would never credit to others the possibility of such great impudence as the complete reversal of facts" (Hitler, *Mein Kampf*). Emerson's description of the British political leaders fifty years earlier applies with no less accuracy to the Tory Dictatorship of to-day: "Truth in private life, untruth in public, marks these home-loving men."

In February 1934 Louis Barthou became French Foreign Minister. He saw the situation clearly and was prepared to take the steps necessary to prevent German domination of Europe. He fully understood Hitler's intentions. Hitler was determined to re-create the German war machine for the purpose of dominating Europe and then the world. There was still time to prevent this, because Germany was not yet rearmed. She could not defy an alliance of threatened powers determined to prevent the fulfilment of Hitler's schemes. To Barthou the only possibility of French survival was to keep Germany in diplomatic isolation by strengthening the ties between France, Poland and

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the Little Entente and to bring about a firm alliance between France and the Soviet Union.

Stalin contributed towards the possibility of an alliance between the Soviet Union and the Western capitalist democracies by making it clear that the Soviets were abandoning the intention of bringing about a World Revolution. At the 17th Congress of the Soviet Union Communist party on January 26th, 1934, he advocated the policy of "Socialism in one Country" and foreshadowed the coming Comintern line of the People's Front.

Under Barthou's leadership the Soviet Union was invited to join the League, and took her seat on September 18th, 1934.

On October 9th, 1934, Barthou was assassinated with King Alexander of Yugoslavia in Marseilles. With Nazi connivance the one statesman in the Western democracies with the ability, determination and integrity to thwart Hitler, was removed.

He was succeeded as French Foreign Minister by Laval who was more after the heart of the Tory Dictatorship. Laval disliked the idea of collaboration with the Soviet Union as much as they did. Instead he preferred to rely upon agreement with Mussolini to keep Hitler in check.

On January 13th, 1935, the inhabitants of the Saar voted almost unanimously to return to the Reich. This incident in the view of Laval and Simon provided the opportunity of reaching a "general settlement" with Germany. They stated the terms of such a settlement after an Anglo-French conference in London on February 3rd, 1935.

Hitler saw his opportunity in this situation. If, following the Anglo-French conference, Simon would accept an invitation to visit Berlin for bilateral Anglo-German conversations, a wedge would be driven between Britain and France. He could then safely repudiate the disarmament clauses of the Versailles Treaty and announce the rearmament of Germany without fear of reprisals.

Simon accepted the invitation, and Hitler announced German rearmament on the 16th March, 1935. Laval, who was at this moment only setting his feet on the path towards the Laval we know to-day, faced by the danger to France of German rearmament, moved at once for a united allied protest to Berlin, an appeal to the League of Nations and the consideration of punitive measures.

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The Tory Dictatorship was determined to prevent anything standing in the way of German rearmament, although they had to move warily and disguise their intentions not to antagonise British public opinion upon which they depended in the final analysis for their retention of power.

On the 18th March, 1935, therefore, Simon sent an independent British communication to Berlin protesting mildly (for the consumption of the British masses) at Germany's unilateral action. It reviewed the terms of the general settlement proposed by Britain and France and the circumstances giving rise to the proposed visit to Berlin. Instead of cancelling the visit and thus condemning out of hand Hitler's unilateral denunciation of the Versailles Treaty, he requested the renewal of the invitation.

Hitler, of course, renewed the invitation. In spite of Laval's protests Simon went to Berlin on March 24th, 1935, having refused Laval's proposal of a three-power conference of Britain, France and Italy and an appeal to the League.

Hitler made it clear to Simon that he intended to have an army of 550,000, that he favoured a Western European air pact and that the German air force was already larger than the British. He was prepared to open negotiations for a naval limitation agreement with Britain.

On the 11th April, 1935, the British, French and Italians met at Stresa to consider German rearmament. Britain sided with Italy against France in refusing to commit herself to any financial or economic, let alone military, sanctions against Germany. The problem of condemning German action was left to the League Council which met immediately after, and was to confine itself to words and avoid action.

To pacify France, so that she would agree to forgo action, Britain and Italy reaffirmed their obligations as guarantors of France's integrity under the Locarno Pact.

As a measure of protection against the growing might of Hitler, Laval reluctantly overcame his scruples against collaboration with the Soviet Union and signed a Treaty of mutual assistance between France and the U.S.S.R. on the 2nd May, 1935.

Czechoslovakia signed a similar agreement with the U.S.S.R. on the 16th May, 1935.

In preparation for the General Election due in 1935, the

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British Government was reconstructed. Baldwin succeeded MacDonald as Prime Minister. Hoare, who succeeded Simon as Foreign Secretary, signed on the 18th June, 1935, the Anglo-German Naval Accord which permitted by bilateral agreement a substantial increase in the German navy, but limited its strength to a proportion of British strength, and in submarines eventually to full British strength. This was done without the consent of France or of the other signatories to the naval clauses of Versailles. A strong statement of French objections had reached Downing Street on the day the accord was signed. This was ignored and the French were faced with a *fait accompli*.

In the meantime the Tory Dictatorship in conjunction with Laval had agreed to betray Abyssinia into the hands of Mussolini.

As long ago as 1933 Mussolini had decided that a victorious war was necessary to him and that Abyssinia should be the victim. That Abyssinia was a member of the League of Nations just as Italy was made no difference. He began to make preparations. In the autumn of 1934 a clash took place between Italian and Abyssinian troops at Wal Wal, well within the Abyssinian borders. Mussolini refused Abyssinia's offer of arbitration, so Haile Selassie, ruler of Abyssinia, appealed to the League of Nations on 14th December, 1934. The Italians were determined to block consideration of the issue by the League. In this they were backed by Laval and Eden. The reason was not far to seek. As part of his plan to bring about a French-Italian block against Hitler—having given up any wider project of collective security—Laval had undertaken not to interfere with Mussolini's Abyssinian adventure. Abyssinia had been unofficially discussed at the Stresa Conference by the French, British and Italian Ministers. Mussolini threatened, if the Abyssinian question was on the agenda, to send no Italian representatives to the League Council which was meeting in April 1935. The British and French agreed that they would prevent it being raised. In May France and Britain persuaded the League not to consider Haile Selassie's complaint on the grounds that, Italy now having agreed to arbitration, a solution was imminent. After many difficulties in arranging personnel and meetings, the arbitration commission handed down its findings. It held that neither Ethiopia nor Italy was responsible for Wal Wal and therefore

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no damages were owing from one to the other. The award was accepted.

The dispute having been settled, Mussolini attacked Abyssinia on October 1st, 1935. He had used the period of arbitration to concentrate his forces and supplies for the attack. As these had to be carried through the Suez Canal, the British and French Governments knew in full detail of the preparations Mussolini had made for this act of aggression.

Indeed, the Tory Dictatorship knew that Italy intended to attack Abyssinia as early as January 1935, when Hoare stated in the House of Commons that Italy had suggested that negotiations should be opened for the "mutual and harmonious development of British and Italian interests in Ethiopia".

On March 6th, 1935, the Foreign Office appointed the secret Maffey Committee to consider whether British interests would be jeopardised by the Italian conquest of Abyssinia. The Foreign Office was clear that the Italian aim was "the virtual absorption of as much Ethiopian territory as can be absorbed without prejudicing Italian influence and interests in other parts of the world". The Maffey Committee reported on June 18th, 1935: "No vital British interests exist in Ethiopia or its neighbourhood sufficient to oblige His Majesty's Government to resist a conquest of Ethiopia by Italy."

That the Tory Dictatorship was determined to let Mussolini have his way is not open to doubt, but they were afraid that British public opinion would interfere with their intentions by forcing them to act against Mussolini in order to keep themselves in office. They therefore had to disguise their intentions, more particularly as a General Election was due in the autumn of 1935.

Both Britain and France saw to it that Abyssinia should obtain no arms. All British licences for arms for Abyssinia were withheld in the spring. On July 25th, 1936, Hoare announced that "for the present" all arms licences to Italy (which did not need them) and to Ethiopia (which was helpless without them) would be refused. Various attempts were made by France and Britain to persuade Mussolini to accept Abyssinia without fighting for it. He refused because he was determined to fight.

In the midst of these evasions Laval and Hoare had a private discussion at Geneva on May 10th, 1935, at which they obviously

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came to an understanding over the policies they were to pursue towards Italy.

In view of the feeling in Britain and with the General Election in the offing, Hoare needed a pretence of "sanctions". Laval was opposed to them, but helped his fellow conspirator out on condition that they would be imposed in such a way as not to interfere with Mussolini's plans. In Laval's words in a speech he made in the Chamber of Deputies on December 28th, 1935: "We found ourselves instantaneously in agreement in ruling out military sanctions, not adopting any measure of naval blockade, never contemplating the closure of the Suez Canal—in a word ruling out everything that might lead to war."

On July 11th, 1935, Hoare had already made it clear to those who were in the game that the Tory Dictatorship would not interfere with Mussolini in his attack on Abyssinia. "We have always understood," he said, "and will understand Italy's desire for overseas expansion. . . . Let members dismiss from their minds the rumour, altogether without foundation, that we have asked the French Government to join in a blockade of Italy and that we ourselves are preparing some isolated form of coercion."

Having agreed with Laval on the 10th September, 1935, not to interfere with Mussolini's plans against Abyssinia and getting in return French support of a pretence of sanctions to hoodwink the British public during the forthcoming election, Hoare the next day addressed the League of Nations in a speech that electrified the world. At last Britain was prepared to back the League of Nations up to the hilt in resisting aggression. "The League stands and my country stands with it for the collective maintenance of the Covenant in its entirety and particularly for steady collective resistance to all acts of unprovoked aggression. . . . His Majesty's Government will be second to none in its intentions to fulfil within the measure of its capacity the obligations which the Covenant lays upon it."

Why did Hoare make such a misleading statement? Why did Hoare conform so blatantly and deliberately to the standards of his class: "Truth in private life, untruth in public"? The answer is simple. His speech of the 11th September was vitally necessary if the Tory Dictatorship was to win the forthcoming General Election. Support of the League of Nations must be

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put in the forefront of the programme if the Tory Dictatorship was to win, but to win the election they were not prepared to change their policy and risk Mussolini being overthrown in Italy with its attendant dangers to the privileges of wealth and birth.

The 1935 General Election was the last General Election fought in this country. It resulted in the election of the present House of Commons. It also marked the perfection of the technique of the Tory Dictatorship for keeping themselves in power to pursue policies to which the overwhelming majority of the British electors were resolutely opposed.

The dishonourable deception practised by honoured political leaders upon the British people was the more deliberate because the British people had given a clear, unmistakable indication of where they stood on the question of the League of Nations and the treatment of aggressors.

In 1934 the League of Nations Union and thirty-eight other organisations organised the Peace Ballot: the result was announced on June 27th, 1935.

The poll resulted in the return of 11,559,165 ballot papers, and was accepted as an accurate expression of the views of the whole electorate. The result was as follows:

<i>Questions.</i>	<i>Yes.</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Doubtful.</i>	<i>Abstentions.</i>
1. Should Great Britain remain a Member of the League of Nations?	11,090,387	355,883	10,470	102,425
2. Are you in favour of an all-round reduction in armaments by international agreement?	10,470,489	862,755	12,062	213,839
3. Are you in favour of an all-round abolition of national military and naval aircraft by international agreement?	9,533,558	1,689,786	16,976	318,845
4. Should the manufacture and sale of armaments for private profit be prohibited by international agreement?	10,417,329	775,415	15,076	351,345

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Questions.	Yes.	No.	Doubt- ful.	Abstentions.
5. Do you consider that, if a nation insists on attacking another, the other nations should combine to compel it to stop by (a) economic and non-military measures?	10,027,608	635,074	27,255	855,107
(b) if necessary, military measures?	6,784,368	2,351,981	40,893	2,364,441

Collective security was overwhelmingly endorsed. There was a substantial majority for economic and, what is more important, for military sanctions.

The result produced an immediate *surface* reversal of policy by the Tory Dictatorship towards the League of Nations.

On November 23rd, 1934, Baldwin, ignoring Stimson's offer to act against Japan in 1932, and which was refused by Simon, said:

"A collective peace system, in my view, is perfectly impracticable in view of the fact to-day that the United States is not yet, to our unbounded regret, a member of the League of Nations and that . . . Germany and Japan have both retired from it. . . . Never as an individual will I sanction the British Navy being used for an armed blockade of any country of the world until I know what the United States of America is going to do."

On July 28th, 1935, Baldwin, accompanied by Hoare and Eden, received a deputation from the Committee that organised the Peace Ballot. He said that he accepted the result of the ballot as a national declaration, and then went on:

" . . . the foreign policy of the Government is founded upon the League of Nations. . . . We value this support. . . . The League of Nations remains, as I said in a speech in Yorkshire, 'the sheet anchor of British policy'."

In November 1935 the Tory Dictatorship went to the country. This General Election was unique in the history of our parliamentary democracy. The leader of the Tory party deliberately misled the electorate as to the policy he would pursue in regard to the League of Nations if the Tory party were returned to

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power. The Tory party pledged itself to carry out the policy of its opponents, the Labour party and that section of the Liberal party opposed to the National Government. The majority of the electorate were hoodwinked into believing they were voting for a policy of full support of the League of Nations, when in fact they were voting for exactly the opposite policy. The one fear that haunted the Tory dictatorship during the election was that the agreement with Laval to give Mussolini what he wanted in Abyssinia would leak out either before or during the General Election. Some weeks before the General Election, statements began to appear in the French Press to the effect that the British Government had abandoned whole-hearted co-operation with the League. Sir John Simon declared emphatically:

"I speak with the authority of the Government when I say there is no truth in this wild accusation at all."

The Tory dictatorship made wide use of a poster showing Baldwin's fist firmly planted on the Covenant of the League with the caption "Our Word is our Bond". In this election, too, the Tory dictatorship introduced another technique of appealing to the people to trust the leader, instead of trusting principles. "Trust Baldwin" was the Tory slogan, to be followed later by "Trust Chamberlain", and in the later stages of the Second World War "Trust Churchill".

Twelve months later, on the 12th November, 1936, Baldwin admitted that he had grossly deceived the electorate.

Replying to a speech by Churchill, demanding a Minister of Supply and accusing Baldwin of failure to rearm effectively, Baldwin said:

"I put before the whole House my views with appalling frankness. My position as the leader of a great party was not altogether a comfortable one. I asked myself what chance was there—when that feeling that was given expression to in Fulham was common throughout the country—what chance was there within the next year or two of that feeling being so changed that the country would give a mandate for rearmament? . . . I cannot think of anything that would have made the loss of the election, from my point of view, more certain."

Actually Baldwin misrepresented the feeling of the country. The people would have willingly faced the cost of effective

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rearmament as part of a policy of collective security. A majority in the Peace Ballot had voted to go to war if necessary in defence of collective security.

The result of this fraudulent appeal was unfortunate. Out of 615 seats, the Tory and near-Tory supporters of the Government secured 431. Hoare's misleading speech for electioneering purposes at the League Assembly on the 11th September, 1935 (he having reached a bargain with Laval the previous day to make ineffective any League action against Italy over Abyssinia), had its reward.

Truly "the primitive simplicity of the masses renders them a more easy prey to a big lie. . . . They would never credit to others the possibility of such great impudence as the complete reversal of facts."

As early as October the British and French Foreign Offices were concocting a plan for handing over Abyssinia to Mussolini. On November 21st, seven days after the General Election, a Foreign Office representative went to Paris to resume discussions on this plan. On December 7th Hoare went to Paris and reached final agreement on the plan with Laval. On December 9th the plan was published in the Paris Press. Such was the public outcry in Britain that Chamberlain and Baldwin called on Hoare on the 18th December to tell him that he had to resign to save the Government. Baldwin was to deny in the debate on the 19th December that he knew anything of the pact beforehand. This was untrue; the Government knew what was being projected.

In his speech on his resignation on December 19th, Hoare made it clear that if the British Government had willed it, Italian aggression could have been brought to a speedy end by imposing oil sanctions. He said:

"It seemed clear that, supposing an oil embargo were to be imposed, and that non-Member States took an effective part in it, the oil embargo might have such an effect upon hostilities as to force their termination."

The end of hostilities under such circumstances meant the end of Mussolini and social revolution in Italy—and that the Tory Dictatorship had to prevent at all costs.

The Hoare-Laval pact was killed by the British people. Hoare

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failed to put it over because he had not prepared the ground adequately by first demoralising public opinion with the spectre of imminent war. His successors were to learn this lesson.

Eden followed Hoare as British Foreign Minister. Although the Minister changed, the policies of the Government did not change. Eden personally had a policy. He believed that Britain could be secure only in a world effectively organised for peace. Eden's appointment was designed to appease the wrath of the British public by whom he was regarded as a staunch supporter of the League of Nations, but, as events would prove, Eden against his better judgment almost always came to terms with those determined to destroy the League as a barrier to Nazi or Fascist aggression.

Eden's first real test came with the re-occupation of the Rhineland by Hitler on March 7th, 1936, in flagrant breach of the Locarno Pact and the Treaty of Versailles. If France had mobilised, Hitler would have been compelled to retreat, but this the French failed to do because they feared the effect of the cost of mobilisation upon the franc. However, Flandin, who had succeeded Laval, was firm to this extent: he refused to negotiate unless the Rhineland was evacuated. If evacuation was refused then sanctions must be imposed. Eden and Halifax were shocked. Their instructions were to urge negotiations with Germany after the League Council should have condemned the Reich. By July 23rd, 1936, the French had retreated. Hitler was firmly entrenched in the Rhineland, in a position to build the Western Wall to prevent the danger of French interference when Hitler carried out his aggressive acts in the East. When the French, British and Belgians met in London on July 23rd, they found themselves in agreement, and Eden said in the Commons:

"The main purpose to which the efforts of all European nations must be directed is to consolidate peace by means of a general settlement."

But Hitler willed otherwise: the promised negotiations came to nothing.

The immediate beneficiary of Hitler's march into the Rhineland was Mussolini. On May 5th, 1936, Italian troops entered the Abyssinian capital.

The time had come for the Tory Dictatorship to condone

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openly Mussolini's act of aggression. The aggressor must be allowed to enjoy the fruits of his victory. Neville Chamberlain broke the news to the country. On June 10th he said:

"The Italian affair in Abyssinia has resulted in a grievous estrangement between two countries with a long and unbroken record of friendship behind them. . . . There is no use for us to shut our eyes to realities. . . . If we have retained any vestige of common sense, surely we must admit that we have tried to impose upon the League a task which it was beyond its powers to fulfil. . . . Surely it is time that the nations who compose the League should review the situation and should decide so to limit the functions of the League in future that they may accord with its real powers. . . ."

On June 20th, 1936, speaking at Wishaw, Scotland, Baldwin said:

"We think it right to drop sanctions because we do not believe their continuance, even if all nations desired it, would serve a useful or effective purpose. . . . We have been abused by our political opponents; we have been mocked by them and by Mr. Lloyd George too. For what? Because we have scuttled? Because we have run away? . . . Do these words mean anything unless they mean that we ran away from the Italian Navy? Can they have any other meaning? In other words, that we have run away from war? . . . If that fire is ever lighted again on the Continent, no man can tell where the heather will cease burning; and it is not a risk that I for one am going to take for my country so long as I have control in the Government."

Mussolini was saved. Hitler had his West Wall to prevent France interfering should the Nazis march East.

On the 25th October, 1936, the Berlin-Rome Axis was formed. On November 25th, 1936, the Berlin-Rome Axis became the Berlin-Rome-Tokyo Axis for the defeat of Bolshevism wherever it might raise its head.

On November 20th, 1936, Eden in a speech at Leamington gave Hitler a clear intimation that the Tory Dictatorship would not resist German expansion to the East:

"These (British) arms will never be used in a war of aggression. . . . They may, and if the occasion arose they would, be used in our own defence and in the defence of France and

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Belgium against unprovoked aggression in accordance with our existing treaty obligations. They may, and if a new Western European settlement can be reached, they would, be used in the defence of Germany were she the victim of unprovoked aggression by any of the other signatories of such a settlement. These, together with our Treaty of Alliance with Iraq and our projected treaty with Egypt, are our definite obligations. In addition our armaments may be used in bringing help to a victim of aggression in any case where, in our judgment, it would be proper under the provisions of the Covenant to do so. I use the word 'may' deliberately, since in such an instance there is no automatic obligation to take military action. It is, moreover, right that this should be so, for nations cannot be expected to incur automatic military obligations save for areas where their vital interests are concerned."

To get at the Soviet Union Hitler would have to trample on Austria and Czechoslovakia—Britain would not interfere.

In the meantime another tragedy was enacted. The Tory Dictatorship was to play its part in destroying the Spanish Republic and handing over Spain to Franco and Fascism.

The situation in Spain was this:

In April 1931 Alfonso XIII abdicated. Under the new Republic the parties which sought liberal reform—the disestablishment of the Church and the breaking up of the large estates—were defeated by the Right. The reply of the Left was to organise the People's Front which secured a clear majority in the election of February 1936. The reforms carried out by the People's Front government were slow in developing and this led to local disorders. The Communists opposed immediate socialisation of the land and nationalisation of industry. They asked not for social revolution, but for discipline, orderly reform and vigilant support of political democracy. The wealthy and the titled prepared to strike back and secretly mobilised their forces to overthrow the People's Front.

The seeds of war were sown not only by the Spanish aristocracy, but also by the Fascist régimes at Rome, Berlin and Lisbon. The Spanish Civil War was not the result of a bloody revolution by the People's Front. Still less was it the result of any red plot launched by Moscow.

With Spain in Fascist hands the lifelines of the British Empire

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were threatened and communications between France and its chief source of military reinforcement in North Africa could be cut.

These were the prizes for which Hitler and Mussolini supported Franco, and the Tory Dictatorship also lent him their support to cut the British throat, because those great British patriots, the Tory leaders, had long reached the point where they placed their class interests before the safety of Britain. Better that Franco should rule in Madrid and British sea communications should be endangered in case of war than have a People's Government in Spain that would cover those routes for us.

On July 19th, 1936, Franco arrived in Tetuan and placed himself at the head of the rebel forces. He came in a British plane. The Spanish people fought back to preserve their new-found liberties. The *coup d'état* became a Civil War.

That the Spanish people lost the Civil War and Franco won was more through the determined inaction of the British and French Governments than through the action of Hitler and Mussolini in intervening.

Hitler and Mussolini intervened on the side of Franco from the outset. They supplied him with equipment, planes and troops. They used the Spanish battlefields to evolve their military technique for the present war.

Britain and France were legally entitled to supply the Republic with arms because it was the legal Government of Spain. Instead they intervened on the side of Franco by adopting a policy of non-intervention under which they withheld supplies of military equipment from the Republican forces which needed them badly, and with which they could have defeated Franco decisively; and also from Franco, who did not need British and French supplies because he was getting all he wanted from Hitler and Mussolini.

The Tory Dictatorship had to disguise its intervention in Spain on the side of Franco as non-intervention, because the British masses were wholeheartedly on the side of the Republicans.

No useful purpose would be served by retailing here the sorry details of the non-intervention farce carried out through the medium of the Non-Intervention Committee in London. The

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ultimate effect was that Franco became the master of Spain and the Spanish Republic was done to death.

Baldwin retired on May 28th, 1937, and Neville Chamberlain became Prime Minister in his place. Chamberlain continued the foreign policy of Baldwin, Hoare and Simon. He stood for Protection, Empire preference and an Anglo-German Entente. His political outlook was conditioned by his class loyalties. The privileges of wealth and birth must be preserved from interference by the people. Soviet Russia he regarded as the enemy of all for which he stood. The keystone of his foreign policy was to reach agreement with Germany and to remove every obstacle from the path of Hitler in his march to the East so that Hitler could "eat Russian bear". In pursuit of this policy he sacrificed Austria and undermined the agreement between France, Czechoslovakia and Russia. Unless the French defensive alliances were undermined France might go to war as Hitler's march to the East developed, and that would drag in Britain too. That this policy ended in leaving Britain to face Germany alone in 1940-1941 was fitting retribution upon the Tory Dictatorship which was prepared to sacrifice the safety of the British nation to preserve its class privileges.

Between August and December 1937 the three aggressor nations were on the march. British ships were bombed and burned in the Mediterranean and the Far East. On October 5th Rome announced that, in spite of non-intervention, more volunteers were going from Italy to Franco's aid. On September 24th Mussolini visited Berlin and joined the Anti-Comintern Pact on November 6th. On November 8th the Japanese took Shanghai. On November 14th the Tory Dictatorship sent an agent to represent them with Franco. On December 11th the Japanese took Nanking and Italy left the League of Nations.

Against the background of these events Chamberlain reached the momentous decision to send a special emissary to Berlin. He had to ignore the Foreign Office and preferred secret messengers, because the policy he was about to develop, if it were revealed, would meet with powerful resistance from public opinion and even from the Foreign Office.

Lord Halifax was selected as a fitting messenger to carry out secret negotiations with the Nazi leaders.

Halifax's mission meant Eden's defeat. Lacking strength of

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character, because of his class loyalties, incapable of insisting on the line he knew to be right, Eden nevertheless saw clearly that the policy of removing everything that stood in the way of Hitler's march to the East could only lead to disaster for Britain. When Halifax's visit was arranged, Eden tendered his resignation and then withdrew it.

There is no account available of the secret discussions between Halifax and Hitler.

There is no question that, as a result of these discussions, Germany acted as if the question of her colonies had been defined; that she was given a free hand in Central Europe, and that France was to be induced to abandon Prague and Moscow. *The Times* pleaded for consideration of Germany's colonial claims on October 28th and for consideration of her claims in Central Europe on November 29th. Garvin in the *Observer* urged that German demands be satisfied at the expense of Czechoslovakia and Austria. At any rate, some sort of a secret understanding was reached, and all subsequent decisions in Berlin and London for the next year rested on mutual confidence that the understanding was in fact a bargain. Hitler purged his entourage of those who were opposed to taking risks by marching East. Fifteen generals were retired; twenty-two generals and eight colonels were promoted or given new jobs; Ribbentrop became Foreign Minister and Schacht retired.

In February 1938, under pressure from Mussolini and from Hitler, Eden was forced to resign. Mussolini had started an "Eden Must Go" campaign in the Italian press when Eden insisted that, as a preliminary to Anglo-Italian agreement, Italy must cease intervention in Spain. On the day Eden resigned, Hitler implicitly demanded Eden's removal. In the debate on Eden's resignation Chamberlain sought to present the issue solely in terms of disagreement over Italy. Eden replied:

"I should not be frank with the House if I were to pretend that it is an isolated issue between my Right Honourable Friend, the Prime Minister, and myself. It is not. Within the last few weeks, upon one of the most important decisions of foreign policy, which did not concern Italy at all, the difference was fundamental."

On March 12th, 1938, Hitler took full advantage of this understanding of the British appeasement attitude which he

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had realised from his talks with Halifax. Austria was occupied and became part of the Reich. The then Archbishop of Canterbury expressed his approval on March 29th. Lord Redesdale expressed "the gratitude of Europe to Hitler". To conciliate British public opinion, protests were made to Berlin, which bluntly rejected them. Halifax cried: "Horrible, horrible! I never thought they would do it."

On April 16th the British Government signed an agreement with Mussolini which, among other things, pledged Mussolini to evacuate Italian forces from Spain only *after* "the termination of hostilities". The British Government undertook to take steps at Geneva to bring about general recognition of the Italian title to Ethiopia.

In the House of Commons on March 24th, 1938, Chamberlain made it clear that he declined to enter into any commitment to aid Czechoslovakia against German aggression or to aid France in carrying out her treaty obligations towards Czechoslovakia.

On April 24th, 1938, Henlein, the leader of the Sudeten Germans, outlined his Karlsbad demands in a speech which for the first time clearly hinted that Sudetenland should be detached from Czechoslovakia and included in the Reich. From that moment onwards the real issue was whether Hitler would wait for Chamberlain and Halifax to wear down Czech-French resistance to the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia, or would resort to force at once.

In May Hitler concentrated troops in a way which suggested that a lightning attack on Czechoslovakia was intended.

Prague was prepared to fight and counter-mobilised accordingly. Daladier assured Prague that France would fulfil her obligations. If Paris fought, Moscow would fight and Britain would be dragged in. Chamberlain and Halifax, faced with this situation, announced that if war was precipitated by Nazi invasion of Czechoslovakia, Britain would support Prague and Paris.

In the face of French-Czech and Anglo-French solidarity Hitler was compelled to withdraw, and this gave Chamberlain and Halifax time to undermine resistance to aggression.

On July 25th it was known in London that Chamberlain had asked Runciman to go to Prague to urge new concessions and

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to provide the necessary breathing space in which to demoralise the British masses and the French Government with the threats of war.

On August 4 Runciman arrived in Prague, and coincident with his arrival the German Press reported "border violations by the Czechs" and hinted at stern retaliation.

On August 26 Hitler staged a great military parade which displayed the new mechanised weapons possessed by the German army. Foreign military attachés gasped at the sight. Their display was intended for a wider audience, the British masses and the French Government, whom it was Chamberlain's task to demoralise so that they would accept "appeasement".

On the 7th September Benes and the Czech Cabinet presented to the Henleinists "Plan No. 4" which went to the limit in making concessions.

If Hitler and Henlein were genuinely concerned with justice and equality for the Sudeten Germans they would accept this plan. If they wanted to disintegrate Czechoslovakia as a further step in the Drang nach Osten or Westen, they would reject it.

That Hitler was determined to reject it and bring about the disintegration of Czechoslovakia was by now so obvious that further discussion of Sudeten "grievances" became absurd.

The onus was now thrown on the Tory Dictatorship alone. If Britain backed France, then Britain, France and the U.S.S.R. would defend Czechoslovakia against Hitler. If Chamberlain and Halifax made British determination to do so unmistakably clear to Hitler, Hitler would be compelled to withdraw as he did in May, because Hitler was not yet in a position to face a world in arms against him. But this would have meant the defeat of the policy of the Tories, all of whom preferred co-operation with Germany to co-operation with Russia, and some of whom were in favour of building up Hitler to destroy Russia.

So Hitler refrained from accepting or rejecting "Plan No. 4" and Chamberlain pointedly refrained from endorsing it.

In May, at one of Lady Astor's luncheons, Chamberlain had already told American correspondents that Czechoslovakia should cede Sudetenland to the Reich.

On September 6th *The Times* said:

"No central Government would still deserve its title if it did not reserve in its own hands defence, foreign policy, and

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finance. . . (But) the Germans are going beyond the mere removal of disabilities and do not find themselves at ease within the Czechoslovak Republic.

"In that case it might be worth while for the Czechoslovak Government to consider whether it should exclude altogether the project, which has found favour in some quarters, of making Czechoslovakia a more homogeneous State by the secession of that fringe of alien populations who are contiguous to the nation with which they are united by race. In any case the wishes of the population concerned would seem to be the decisively important element in any solution that can hope to be regarded as permanent and the advantages to Czechoslovakia of becoming a homogeneous State might conceivably outweigh the obvious disadvantages of losing the Sudeten German districts of the borderland."

Beaverbrook and Rothermere also advocated partition. The German propaganda machine worked up in a deafening crescendo.

On Monday evening, September 12th, Hitler made his Nuremberg speech to help Chamberlain crack British, French and Czech nerves, by describing the growing military might of Germany and committing himself to the "liberation" of the Sudetens by the Reich.

On the 15th September London and Paris pressed the Czechs to accept a plebiscite, which under the conditions of terrorism in Sudetenland meant the partition of Czechoslovakia. Chamberlain wished to appease British public opinion by handing over Sudetenland to Hitler in the guise of a democratic decision by the Sudeten people themselves.

To impress the British public that the threat of war was nearer and so demoralise them further, he called in the Defence Minister to confer with the "Inner Cabinet", composed of Simon, who had facilitated the Japanese conquest of Manchukuo; Hoare, who had connived at the Italian conquest of Abyssinia; and Halifax, the secret emissary to Hitler.

In the meantime Henlein had attempted a putsch which was easily defeated by the Czechs, and on the 15th September he fled to Germany.

On the 15th September Chamberlain met Hitler at Berchtesgaden "to find a peaceful solution".

Chamberlain went to Berchtesgaden, not to negotiate a settle-

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ment. The settlement had been negotiated long before. Only the details needed to be worked out. Chamberlain had to provide a convincing background for betraying the Czechs into Hitler's hands in order to save himself from retribution at the hands of the British people.

On September 28th he explained the conference to the House of Commons in terms designed to build up an impression of crisis and imminent war which could only be averted by the partition of Czechoslovakia:

"At this first conversation, which lasted three hours and at which only an interpreter was present besides Herr Hitler and myself, I very soon became aware that the situation was much more acute and much more urgent than I had realised. In courteous but perfectly definite terms, Herr Hitler made it plain he had made up his mind the Sudeten Germans must have the right of self-determination and of returning, if they wished, to the Reich. If they could not achieve this by their own efforts, he said, he would assist them to do so, and he declared categorically that, rather than wait, he would be prepared to risk a world war. . . .

"So strongly did I get the impression that the Chancellor was contemplating an immediate invasion of Czechoslovakia that I asked him why he had allowed me to travel all that way, since I evidently was wasting my time. He said if I could give him there and then the assurance that the British Government accepted the principle of self-determination, he was quite ready to discuss ways and means of carrying it out. If, on the contrary, I told him such a principle could not be considered by the British Government, then he agreed it was no use to continue our conversation. I was of course in no position to give there and then such assurance, but I undertook to return at once to consult my colleagues if he would refrain from active hostilities until I had had time to obtain their reply. That assurance he gave, provided, he said, nothing happened in Czechoslovakia of such a nature as to force his hands, and that assurance has remained binding ever since.

"I have no doubt now, looking back, that my visit alone prevented an invasion for which everything had been prepared, and it was clear to me that with German troops in the position they then occupied, nothing anybody could do would prevent an invasion unless the right of self-determination was granted, and that quickly, to the Sudeten Germans. And that was the sole hope of a peaceful solution."

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On the 18th September Daladier and Bonnet came to London in order to agree to present jointly with Britain an ultimatum to the Czechs to hand over the Sudetenland to Hitler.

On Wednesday, September 21st, 1938, the Czech Government capitulated under pressure from Britain and France. Czechoslovakia committed suicide at Chamberlain's request. But the triumph of the Tory Dictatorship was not complete. With the Czech capitulation the crisis should have ended. It did not, because in Britain and France relief at the solution of the crisis was giving way to a sense of outrage. Churchill declared that the capitulation was "a complete surrender of the Western democracies to the Nazi threat of force" and would free 25 German divisions to threaten the Western front. Labour organised a campaign of protest. Resistance to the settlement was growing and might sweep the Tory Dictatorship out of office.

Therefore it was necessary for Chamberlain to revive the war panic in order to ensure that the British public would acquiesce when Chamberlain laid his gifts at Hitler's feet.

Chamberlain went to Godesberg on September 22nd to discuss the details of the partition of Czechoslovakia. Here was the opportunity to make the play that would demoralise British public opinion into complete acquiescence. Hitler's new terms at Godesberg were too onerous, Chamberlain said. That Chamberlain thought them so is impossible to believe, because he had already decided that the Czechoslovak Republic must go and he had already compelled Paris and Prague to accept the principle of partition. Even the questions of a-time limit and of immediate occupation were not in themselves important enough to justify a belated decision to fight. But they provided an excuse for creating another war scare.

To meet the rising flood of protest a new threat of war must be created and Parliament and people must be led to the very brink of war and then snatched back at the last possible moment through apparent concessions by Hitler, making possible a settlement on the basis of the original demands which would now appear eminently desirable.

On Friday the 23rd the re-building of the war scare began. Britain and France that evening told the Czechs they could

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not "continue to take the responsibility of advising them not to mobilise". Twenty-four hours later France began to mobilise 500,000 men. In Britain all citizens were ordered to report for the fitting and issue of gas masks.

London hospitals made arrangements to move their patients to make room for air raid casualties. The B.B.C. gave instructions on how to avoid sudden death in air raids. School children were standing by for evacuation. Trenches were dug in the parks and thousands of men and women filled sandbags to protect public buildings.

That these measures had no relevance to actual defence against air raids, the British people were not to know. However, Chamberlain, Simon, Hoare, and Halifax knew full well that gas masks are no protection against air attack..

Amidst these preparations Chamberlain flew back to London on Saturday, 24th September, 1938. The following days were filled with negotiations which were all part of the play, France threatening to support Czechoslovakia if she were invaded, and Hitler threatening to invade.

On Wednesday, 28th September, the House of Commons assembled beneath the cardboard threat of an immediate outbreak of war. Having built up the threat of war in his speech, Chamberlain had to snatch Europe from the brink. He went on:

"I felt impelled to send one more last letter—the last last—to the Chancellor. I sent him the following personal message:

"'After reading your letter I feel certain that you can get all essentials without war and without delay. I am ready to come to Berlin myself at once to discuss arrangements for transfer with you and representatives of the Czech Government, together with representatives of France and Italy if you desire. I feel convinced that we could reach agreement in a week. However much you distrust the Prague Government's intentions, you cannot doubt the power of the British and French Governments to see that the promises are carried out fairly and fully and forthwith. As you know, I have stated publicly that we are prepared to undertake that they shall be so carried out. I cannot believe that you will take the responsibility of starting a world war which may end civilisation, for the sake of a few days' delay in settling this long-standing problem.'"

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At the dramatic moment a message was passed to Chamberlain; he read it, smiled, and continued:

"That is not all. I have something further to say to the House yet. I have now been informed by Herr Hitler that he invites me to meet him at Munich to-morrow morning . . .

"He has also invited Signor Mussolini and M. Daladier. Signor Mussolini has accepted and I have no doubt M. Daladier will also accept. I need not say what my answer will be (an Hon. Member: 'Thank God for the Prime Minister!') We are all patriots, and there can be no Hon. Member of this House who did not feel his heart leap that the crisis has been once more postponed to give us once more an opportunity to try what reason and goodwill and discussion will do to settle a problem which is already within sight of settlement. Mr. Speaker, I cannot say any more. I am sure that the House will be ready to release me now to go and see what I can make of this last effort. Perhaps they may think it will be well, in view of this new development, that this debate shall stand adjourned for a few days, when perhaps we may meet in happier circumstances."

On the 29th September, 1938, Hitler, Chamberlain, Daladier and Mussolini met at Munich and handed over the Sudetenland to Hitler, including immediate occupation. The renewed threat of war had achieved its end. Opposition in Britain there was to this agreement, but the majority of the British people believed that Chamberlain had brought back peace with honour from Munich.

Duff Cooper resigned from the Cabinet. He said in the Commons:

"It was not for Serbia or Belgium we fought in 1914, though it suited some people to say so, but we were fighting then, as we should have been fighting last week, in order that one Great Power should not be allowed, in disregard of treaty obligations and the laws of nations and against all morality, to dominate by brutal force the continent of Europe. . . . Throughout these days the Prime Minister has believed in addressing Herr Hitler through the language of sweet reasonableness. I have believed he was more open to the language of the mailed fist. . . . I tried to swallow them (the Munich terms), but they stuck in my throat. . . . I have perhaps ruined my political career, but that is of little matter. I have

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retained something which is to me of greater value—I can still walk about the world with my head erect.”

Churchill alone bluntly stated the true position. He said in the House of Commons:

“I begin by saying what everybody would like to neglect or forget, but what must, nevertheless, be stated—namely, that we have sustained a total, unmitigated defeat. We are in the presence of a disaster of the first magnitude which has befallen Great Britain and France. Do not let us blind ourselves. We must expect that all the countries of Central and Eastern Europe will make the best terms they can with the triumphant Nazi Power. The series of alliances in Central Europe upon which France relied for safety has been swept away. I see no reason to think it can be reconstituted.

“The road down the Danube, with all its coal and iron, the road to the Black Sea and Turkey, has been broken. It seems to me that all the countries of Mittel Europa and the Danube valley, one after the other, will be drawn into the vast systems of Nazi politics radiating from Berlin. I believe that can be achieved quite smoothly and easily without firing a single shot . . .

“. . . (Germany may make demands on Britain in a few years or months which) . . . may effect surrender of territory or surrender of liberty, and I foresee and foretell a policy that will carry with it restraint of freedom in Parliament, on the platform, and in the press. Then, with the press under a control half direct but more potently indirect, every expression of public opinion doped and chloroformed into acquiescence, we shall be conducted by stages along our journey.”

By the Munich agreement the Tory Dictatorship had achieved its main objective. The French alliances with Czechoslovakia and the U.S.S.R. were destroyed. The way was open for Hitler to march eastwards against the Soviets and thus destroy that symbol of revolution which it had been the main objective of the Tory policy to destroy ever since 1917.

There was much criticism of the Munich agreement and the policies that led up to it. On October 26th, 1938, Lloyd George said:

“A bad peace is no peace at all. I will tell you what we shall find, and I am speaking now as one who has taken a great part in the affairs of this country at the most critical

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moment in the whole of its history: we shall have forfeited honour; we shall have lost the respect of the world, and, what is still worse, we shall have lost our own self-respect. And in the end there will be no peace. There will be war, and war without friends. . . . We handed over a little democratic State in Central Europe, wrapped in the Union Jack and the Tricolour, to a ruthless dictator who will deny freedom to both Czechs and Germans alike. . . . I know something about armaments. The French army is to-day the best army in Europe, and the Russian army is the greatest army in the world so far as numbers are concerned and so far as its air force is concerned."

On October 8th Pierre Cot, former French Air Minister, revealed that France, Britain and Czechoslovakia alone had more planes than the Reich, and that with only half the Soviet Air Force added, their forces would outnumber those of Germany and Italy combined.

In the light of these revelations it was highly necessary to offer plausible explanations for Munich to prevent public disillusionment at the price of "peace without honour" becoming politically dangerous.

The solution was to blame the Soviet Union. In a speech at Shoreham on October 10th, 1938, Earl Winterton, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, said that the Soviet Union did not offer help in the Czechoslovakian crisis, but "only made vague promises owing to her military weakness". Maisky promptly protested to Halifax.

The real facts were, of course, that the Soviet Union had been precise in its offer of help and, as Lloyd George pointed out, was militarily strong.

Mr. Litvinov, speaking for Russia at the League of Nations, said:

"When, a few days before I left for Geneva, the French Government for the first time enquired as to our attitude in the event of an attack on Czechoslovakia, I gave in the name of my Government the following perfectly clear and unambiguous reply:

"We intend to fulfil our obligations under the pact, and, together with France, to afford assistance to Czechoslovakia by the ways open to us. Our War Department is ready immediately to participate in a conference with

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representatives of the French and Czechoslovak War Departments, in order to discuss the measures appropriate to the moment. Independently of this, we should consider desirable that the question be raised at the League of Nations if only as yet under Article II, with the object, first of mobilising public opinion, and, secondly, of ascertaining the position of certain other States, whose passive aid might be extremely valuable. It was necessary, however, to exhaust all means of averting an armed conflict, and we considered one such method to be an immediate consultation between the Great Powers of Europe and other interested States, in order if possible to decide on the terms of a collective *démarche*.'

"This is how our reply was framed. It was only two days ago that the Czechoslovak Government addressed a formal enquiry to my Government as to whether the Soviet Union is prepared, in accordance with the Soviet-Czech pact, to render Czechoslovakia immediate and effective aid if France, loyal to her obligations, will render similar assistance, to which my Government gave a clear answer in the affirmative."

On September 23rd Litvinov and Maisky had a long conversation at Geneva with the British representatives, Earl de la Warr and Mr. R. A. Butler, then Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. The Soviet Minister urged the immediate meeting of the Great Powers of Europe to decide on ways and means of maintaining the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Czechoslovakia. Asked by the British if he would agree to the meeting being held in London, he said yes. Earl de la Warr at once cabled the British Government, but Whitehall did not reply: for obvious reasons such a meeting would have defeated the Tory game.

As Churchill had foreseen, the Nazis wasted no time in telling the Tory Dictatorship that they must silence their critics.

On October 9th, 1938, Hitler said:

"We know that the aim of these men would be to start war. . . . We know further that now, as before, there is lurking threateningly the Jewish international world enemy which has found living expression in Bolshevism. . . . We want peace. . . . It is also part of the task of securing world peace that responsible statesmen and politicians refrain from constantly meddling talk."

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The *Frankfurter Zeitung* said:

“The English and French must make it clear, beyond doubt, whether their Governments are capable of carrying out a policy of peaceful understanding and of settling the differences which exist between the two axes, or whether ‘public opinion’ will not allow this. We cannot enter into agreement with Chamberlain only to be suddenly confronted with a Churchill. We cannot afford to offer our hands to Daladier only to discover suddenly that Mandel has taken his place. . . . As long as Churchill and Lloyd George are able to deliver provocative radio speeches across the ocean, even if their own Government disavows them, we cannot suppose that England’s public opinion is really ready for understanding. . . . All further progress must therefore be preceded by a final clarification within England and France.”

In the midst of the crisis Simon banned the showing of a Paramount news reel, containing an interview with Wickham Steed. The October issue of the *March of Time* was also banned. In fact there was an effective censorship of the press, radio and the cinema. Pressure was made effective by official “requests”, silent threats and pressure from important advertisers. The Tory Dictatorship was Fascist in conception with a technique that was none the less effective because it was based on the traditions of Eton and Harrow. It preserved a gentlemanly outward appearance, but was ruthless in attaining its objectives.

The Government was reconstructed: Runciman became Lord President of the Council and John Anderson became Lord Privy Seal. Chamberlain now began to feel his way towards a “general settlement” with Germany. Hitler hinted that he was ready to conclude an air pact with Britain if London would accept a ratio of 3 to 1 in Germany’s favour.

Some pretence at rearmament was forced by public opinion on the Government, but Chamberlain paid heed to Hitler’s objection to any further expansion of British armaments. The demand for a Ministry of Supply to organise war production was rejected.

On November 1st, 1938, Chamberlain told the House of Commons that Germany must be conceded mastery of Central and South-Eastern Europe. He said:

“Geographically Germany must occupy the predominating position in relation to the States of Central and South-Eastern

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Europe. I do not see any reason why we should expect a fundamental change to take place in these regions. Far from this country being concerned, we have no wish to block Germany out of these countries or encircle her economically. . . . There may be some competition, but competition is a thing on which we have thrived in the past. In my view, there is room both for Germany and ourselves in the trade with these countries and neither of us ought to try to obtain an exclusive position there."

Japan drew its own conclusions from Munich. On October 21st she took Canton, and on October 25th Hankow. Hong Kong was cut off from its hinterland. The Yangtse was closed to all shipping. Chamberlain told the House of Commons on November 2nd:

"China cannot be developed into a real market without the influx of a great deal of capital, and the fact that so much capital is being destroyed during the war means that even more will have to be introduced after the war is over. It is quite certain that it cannot be supplied by Japan. Therefore, when anyone appears to contemplate a future in which Japan has a monopoly of the Chinese trade and we shall be excluded from it, I think it is flying in the face of facts. It is quite certain that when the war is over and the reconstruction of China begins, she cannot be reconstructed without some help from this country."

The Tory Dictatorship would help Japan to exploit conquered China, to the exclusion of other foreign interests, and thereby, it was hoped, save Hong Kong and the East Indies.

On November 16th an agreement between the British and Italian Governments formally sanctioned Italian intervention in Spain and recognised the Italian title to Ethiopia. This was not enough. Mussolini wanted a Munich peace in the Mediterranean, mainly at French expense. On November 30th there was an Italian outcry for Tunisia, Nice, Savoy and Corsica. The French refused to play the part of Czechoslovakia with the result that Chamberlain's and Halifax's visit to Rome in the middle of January 1939 was largely futile.

The results were summed up by the Italian Foreign Office in the *Informazione Diplomatica* of January 15th:

"Nothing sensational transpired since (Anglo-Italian)

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relations are defined in the accords of April 16th that went into effect November 16th. These accords already have been loyally applied by both sides. . . . Italy stressed in a most formal manner that the basis of Italian foreign policy is and will continue to be the Rome-Berlin Axis. As for Spain, Il Duce repeated that the last Italian Legionnaires would be repatriated when the Reds do likewise and when Franco received belligerent rights, which it is simply absurd to refuse any longer. Il Duce, however, added that if in the near future there is intervention on a larger scale on the part of Governments friendly to Negrin, Italy will resume her liberty of action because she would thus consider the non-intervention policy ended and a failure. As for Italo-French relations, Il Duce stated that the Spanish question deeply divided the two countries and only when the war was finished might it be possible to speak of arbitration or mediation, four-power conferences and much less of three-power ones."

On March 15th, 1939, Hitler marched into Prague and took possession of the whole of Czechoslovakia. Chamberlain said in the House of Commons that the Anglo-French guarantee was no longer applicable. The ground for abandonment of their guarantee of the integrity of the new frontiers of Czechoslovakia, made at the time of Munich, was that, Slovakia having declared her independence, Czechoslovakia had disintegrated: the State which England and France had guaranteed no longer existed. The British Government was therefore not bound by its undertaking. Appeasement was to continue.

Chamberlain in the House of Commons said:

"I have so often heard charges of a breach of faith bandied about, which did not seem to be founded on sufficient premises. I do not wish to associate myself to-day with any charges of that character, but I am bound to say that I cannot believe anything of the kind that now has taken place was contemplated by any of the signatories of the Munich agreement."

Simon in the same debate said:

"It is indeed impossible to suppose that in these circumstances the guarantee to maintain the State of Czechoslovakia can have any meaning. I agree that this situation is in the sharpest conflict with what was contemplated at Munich, but we ought not to spend time in rebuking one another, in

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failing to express that deepest sympathy with the Czechoslovak people, for everybody feels that . . .

"It is really essential that we should not enter into any extensive general and undefined commitment with the result that, to a large extent, our foreign policy would depend, not on this country, this Parliament and its electors, but on a lot of foreign Governments. I do not see how we can avoid this result—namely, that presently one or other of these foreign countries who would really have a call upon us in these circumstances, might involve us in the greatest possible military excursion, although it is quite certain that the judgment of the democracy in this country would not support it."

The day after Hitler's march into Prague, the Federation of British Industries and the Reichsgruppe Industrie of Germany signed an agreement to "replace destructive competition by constructive co-operation" through the creation of Anglo-German cartels.

On Friday, March 17th, 1939, speaking at Birmingham, Chamberlain reversed the position he had taken up in the House of Commons two days before. He abandoned appeasement as far as Germany was concerned (but not as regards Italy or Japan). No longer was Hitler to be given a free hand to do what he liked in South-Eastern Europe.

Chamberlain said:

"Is this the end of an old adventure or is it the beginning of a new?"

"Is this the last attack upon a small state or is it to be followed by others?"

"Is this, in fact, a step in the direction of an attempt to dominate the world by force? Ladies and gentlemen, those are grave and serious questions.

"I am not going to answer them to-night, but I am sure they will require grave and serious consideration, not only of Germany's neighbours, but of others perhaps even beyond the confines of Europe.

"Already there are indications that the process has begun, and it is obvious that it is likely now to be speeded up.

"We ourselves will naturally turn first to our partners in the British Commonwealth of Nations and to France, to whom we are so closely bound, and I have no doubt that others, too, knowing that we are not disinterested in what goes on in South-Eastern Europe, will wish to have our counsel and advice. . . ."

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Why did Chamberlain call halt to Hitler on Friday, when on Wednesday he had not been prepared to interfere? The reason is not far to seek. Between the Wednesday and the Friday there had been an outcry in this country equal in intensity to the outcry against the Hoare-Laval Pact. At the same time it became increasingly clear that Hitler was turning his eyes to the West as much as to the East.

On March 13th Coulondre, the French Ambassador in Berlin, had reported this change of policy to Bonnet:

"Will Germany find it necessary to mark time for a while? Or, taking advantage of its acquired momentum and of the stupor of the Central European States, will it continue its drive towards the East? Or, again, will it be tempted to face about and put an end to the opposition of the Western Powers which is interfering with the Reich's liberty of action in the East? In other words, will the Fuehrer be tempted to return to the idea expressed by the author of *Mein Kampf*, which, be it said, is identical with the classic doctrine held by the German General Staff, according to which Germany cannot accomplish her high destiny in the East until France has been crushed, and, as a consequence, Britain reduced to impotence on the Continent? We must likewise examine whether there is still time to erect in the East a wall capable of stemming to a certain extent the German drive, and if to this end we should not take advantage of the favourable circumstances offered to us by the tension and anxiety which prevail in the Central European capitals, especially in Warsaw. . . .

"It is quite possible that to-morrow Hitler will apply to Rumania or Poland the same means that had been so successful against Austria and Czechoslovakia and place before them the alternatives of the massacre of civil populations and the destruction of open towns, or the acceptance of the German terms, however onerous and humiliating they may be. One must not, however, exclude the possibility that the Reich, before carrying out its vast programme in the East, will first turn against the Western Powers. . . .

"We must reckon with the risk of seeing Germany engaged in such an undertaking. This risk may even be increased by the intensification and the speeding up of our rearmament. However, as we have no choice save either to bow one day to Hitler's will, or, by uniting our forces with those of Britain, to build up a military machine, and especially an air force, strong enough to impress Germany, it is vital that we

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should without delay: (a) rearm to the maximum of our capacity; (b) as far as possible, avoid all publicity about this intensive rearmament. In any case, whatever new form German dynamism may take after the conquest of Bohemia and Moravia, we are always driven to the same conclusion: to the unavoidable necessity for concentrating the nation's energies towards as vast and as swift a development of its military strength as possible, especially with regard to its air force. In view of the impulsive character of the Nazi leaders, the state of mental intoxication in which the Fuehrer must be at present, and the irritation and alarm caused in Germany by the rearmament of the democracies and by the attitude of America, I consider that we must proceed without delay to the industrial mobilisation of the country as secretly and as intensively as possible."

On March 16 Bonnet instructed the French Ambassador in London to urge the necessity of protesting to Berlin.

Reporting to Beck, the Polish Foreign Minister, the Polish Ambassador in London said:

"The British appeasers had reckoned with the expectation that Germany would find it difficult to absorb territories ceded to it, and, thanks to these difficulties and thanks to the opposition of Russia, would lose the capacity to expand and its forcefulness. It was foreseen that war between Russia and Germany would ensue, which would weaken both, not without affording indirect advantage to the Western Powers. The rapid succession of events by which Germany acquired valuable, bloodless booty showed the weakness of these arguments. It indicated the fact that in the last analysis this was an excuse for permitting the responsible statesmen of the Western Powers to withdraw along the line of least resistance. Serious misgivings arose when Germany, instead of losing force as a result of its action in the East, attained additional strength. From this conviction resulted an entirely new tone towards Germany."

Appeasement of Hitler was becoming weaker. The problem of Chamberlain, Halifax and the rest of the inner circle of the Tory Dictatorship was not to organise a new coalition against Hitler, but how to revive the old coalition which they had deliberately destroyed in order to give Hitler a free hand to march to the East.

In abandoning appeasement of Hitler, the Tory Dictatorship

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were placed on the horns of a dilemma. In giving Hitler a free hand in the East they had sacrificed 35 Czech divisions which were surrendered in effect without firing a shot, besides giving Hitler the tremendous armaments capacity of the Skoda works. The only effective alliance which still could avert war was a firm military alliance between Britain, France and the Soviet Union to include Poland, Rumania and Turkey for the purpose of resisting aggression. To enter into a firm alliance with the Soviet Union for such a purpose meant clasping to their bosom what the Tory Dictatorship regarded as the main enemy of the privileges of wealth and birth. Reason and public opinion made Chamberlain, Halifax and the rest go through the motions of reaching agreement with the Soviets. Their emotions and their preconceived ideas made their efforts half-hearted. Any excuse throughout those pregnant months between the march into Prague and the outbreak of war was seized to avoid entering into the embrace with the Soviet Union which they felt would be fatal to their class interests, but which would have averted war. Poland and the Baltic States wished to avoid Russian guarantees. They were afraid of the embrace of the Soviet bear. Chamberlain and Halifax made a virtue of refusing to force small nations to accept unpleasant realities, although up to the march into Prague they had been ready to force suicide upon any small nation, like Czechoslovakia, that stood in the way of their dream of getting Hitler to eat the Soviet bear.

On March 19th, 1939, Halifax, in a note that has never been published, approached the Soviet Union to join a pact to resist further aggression.

On March 21st, 1939, the following official notice was published in Moscow:

"Poland and Rumania did not apply to the Soviet Government for help, nor did they inform that Government of any danger threatening them.

"What actually happened was that on March 18 (Saturday), the British Government informed the Soviet Government of the existence of weighty reasons to fear an act of violence over Rumania and enquired about the possible position of the Soviet Government in such an eventuality.

"In reply to this enquiry the Soviet Government put forward a proposal for the calling of a Conference of representatives of the States most closely interested—namely, Great Britain,

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France, Poland, Rumania, Turkey and the Soviet Union.

"In the opinion of the Soviet Government such a Conference would give the maximum possibilities for the elucidation of the real situation and the position of all the participants at the Conference. The British Government, however, found this proposal premature."

The *Manchester Guardian's* Moscow correspondent aptly summed up the realities of the situation when he said:

"The proposal is almost identical with that made by the Soviet Union last year after Herr Hitler's seizure of Austria, and is in line with the Government's consistent advocacy of collective action against aggression.

"Apparently the British Government is still unwilling to accept this policy, but the reason given—that it is premature—is held to be unconvincing in the light of the British Government's assertion of the imminent danger towards Rumania.

"The Soviet Union does not intend that the Western Powers shall manœuvre her into bearing alone the main brunt of resistance to Herr Hitler. It is believed that any efforts to commit Russia alone will only convince Russia that British policy still seeks to involve the Soviet Union in a mutually ruinous war with Germany."

On March 31st, 1939, Chamberlain announced that, pending the conclusion of negotiations, Britain would give Poland all the support in her power "in the event of any action which clearly threatened Polish independence and which the Polish Government accordingly considered it vital to resist with their national forces". To give this undertaking without agreement with the U.S.S.R. was one of the crucial mistakes of the Tory Dictatorship, which inevitably flowed from their anti-Soviet bias.

On April 13, 1939, Italy forcibly annexed Albania, but as far as Italy was concerned, appeasement was still in full swing. Italy's act of aggression, in Chamberlain's view, did not call for the denunciation of the Anglo-Italian agreement of April 1938.

On May 12, 1939, Chamberlain told the House of Commons that, pending a definite alliance with Turkey:

"H.M. Government and the Turkish Government declared that in the event of aggression leading to war in the Mediterranean area they would be prepared to co-operate and lend each other all aid and assistance in their power."

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On July 24, 1939, Chamberlain announced a formula agreed between Britain and Japan, which, in spite of denials by Chamberlain and Halifax that it meant any change in British policy, implied in practice that Britain was to co-operate with Japan in consolidating Japanese control of the areas of China already conquered and in facilitating the conquest of the rest of China by Japan:

"His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom fully recognise the actual situation in China, where hostilities on a large scale are in progress, and note that as long as that state of affairs continues to exist the Japanese forces in China have special requirements for the purpose of safeguarding their own security and maintaining public order in the regions under their control and that they have to suppress or remove such causes or acts as will obstruct them or benefit their enemy. H.M. Government have no intention of countenancing any acts or measures prejudicial to the attainment of the above-mentioned objects by the Japanese forces, and they will take this opportunity to confirm their policy in this respect by making it plain to British authorities and British nationals in China that they should refrain from such acts and measures."

In the meantime, negotiations with Stalin dragged on their weary and ineffective course. Poland, Rumania and Turkey could only be protected against Hitler by the U.S.S.R. As failure to come to agreement, because of Chamberlain's refusal to pay Stalin's price of a cast-iron military alliance to resist aggression, became apparent, Chamberlain reverted to appeasement. In May he permitted Hitler to secure the £6,000,000 of Czech gold lodged in London. In July Hudson and Sir Horace Wilson discussed with Wohltat a British "disarmament loan" to Germany of £1000 million sterling.

These acts, taken on top of the attitude to Italy over Albania and to Japan, revealed a state of mind in the Tory leaders highly disturbing to the Russians.

During this period Lloyd George, Churchill and others issued repeated warnings of the vital necessity of coming to terms with Stalin if war was to be averted, or, if war broke out, to avoid disaster.

Churchill said in the *Daily Telegraph* on the 8th June, 1939:

"Nor should there be any serious difficulty in guaranteeing

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the Baltic States and Finland. The Russian claim that these should be included in the triple guarantee is well founded. There is no sense in having a crack in the peace diving bell.

"People say, 'What if they do not wish to be guaranteed?' It is certain, however, that if Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia were invaded by the Nazis or subverted to the Nazi system by propaganda and intrigue from within, the whole of Europe would be dragged into war. The independence of the Baltic States is of the highest consequence to Poland. The closest relations, political and military, have been established between them, severally and jointly, and Poland. If their independence or integrity is compromised by Nazidom, Poland must fight. Great Britain and France must fight. Why not then concert in good time, publicly and courageously, the measures which may render such a fight unnecessary?"

Lloyd George in the House of Commons on July 23rd, 1939, said:

"Chamberlain guaranteed Poland, Rumania and Greece against the huge army of Germany.

"It looked magnificent, but men who had some knowledge of the problems pointed out to him that it was not war. I was the first to call attention to that obvious fact in the House of Commons. I denounced it as sheer madness to give such a pledge in the absence of military support from Russia.

"Russian troops could alone hope to reach the battlefield in time to save the Polish army from being crushed by an overwhelming German superiority in men, and especially in equipment.

"The Chief of our General Staff was abroad in France when this harebrained pledge was given. I have good reason to believe that on his return he and his advisers pointed out that we did not possess the means to redeem it."

Then, after denouncing the British Government's handling of the negotiations with the Soviet Union, he concluded:

"Lord Halifax visited Hitler and Goering. Chamberlain flew into the Fuehrer's arms three times in succession. He went specially to Rome to embrace Mussolini, to present him with the official recognition of the conquest of Abyssinia, and practically to tell him that we would not bother him about his invasion of Spain.

"Why send only a Foreign Office bureaucrat to represent us in an infinitely more powerful country which was offering to come to our aid?"

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"There is only one answer. Mr. Neville Chamberlain, Lord Halifax and Sir John Simon do not want any association with Russia.

"If they do not, they ought not to have dallied with her, and, above all, they ought not to have insulted her with the glaring contrast between the standing of the emissaries we despatch to transact business with her and those we had already despatched to confer with Hitler and Mussolini.

"We may drive her into a hostility which would suit the Dictators, but would be fatal to the Empires of France and Britain."

Convinced that the Tory Dictatorship did not mean business, Stalin signed a pact of non-aggression with Hitler on August 23rd, 1939.

In spite of his denials, Chamberlain knew as early as May that Hitler was prepared to grant to Stalin in exchange for mere neutrality what Chamberlain would not grant in return for an alliance.

M. Henri Bérenger, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Commission of the French Senate, wrote:

"It can be stated that both Paris and London had been warned by reliable sources that an association was being prepared between Berlin and Moscow to divide among themselves the spheres of influence and even the territories from the Baltic to the Aegean Sea, between the Oder, the Danube and the Dniester, from the Carpathians to the Balkans. The Western Powers had been informed that constant negotiations were being conducted between the Reich and the Kremlin in the diplomatic, military and financial fields in order to link up the present with the past—that is, to resuscitate the Chicherin-Rathenau agreement concluded in 1922 at Rapallo. The Western Powers were aware of this possibility, but they were not quite sure that it would materialise."

On Friday, September 1, 1939, Hitler struck at Poland. On September 3, after two days of doubt and much prodding from the House of Commons, Chamberlain with great reluctance did what had to be done: he declared war on Hitler.

On the outbreak of war Churchill and Eden joined the Government, but the Labour and Opposition Liberal parties refused to serve under Chamberlain.

Chamberlain reluctantly declared war on Hitlerite Germany.

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His fellow appeaser, Bonnet, was even more reluctant. To both, Soviet Russia was still the real enemy. Yet Hitler had placed them on the horns of a dilemma from which there was no escape but war against Germany.

No longer could they protect their Fascist-anti-Bolshevik friend, Hitler, from the consequences of his own actions.

Chamberlain's dilemma was obvious. There was a growing threat to the British Empire, which became more potent with every accession of strength to Hitler. To refuse to fight now that Poland was attacked was to court disaster.

Yet war against Hitler was profoundly dangerous even now, because the policy of appeasement, of encouraging the building up of the military and economic strength of Fascism everywhere as the bulwark against revolution and attack on the privileges of wealth had so undermined the strategic position of the British Empire as to make effective defence doubtful.

The war had already been all but lost for Britain on the battlefields of Spain when, with the active connivance of Chamberlain and his friends, the Spanish Republic had been done to death. The life-line of the British Empire ran within very few miles of the coast of Spain. The policy of the Tory Dictatorship had placed a hostile Fascist dictator athwart those lines of communication at one of their most vulnerable points.

The war had already been all but lost when Chamberlain and Halifax were too reluctant, too ignorant and too arrogant, to make the sacrifices necessary to secure a close military alliance with Russia. The rights of free peoples, the Czechs, the Austrians, the Abyssinians, the Spaniards, could be ruthlessly destroyed to clear a path for Hitler to the East, but the rights of the Baltic States could not be interfered with, much less destroyed, to reach an alliance with Stalin that would have prevented war.

As the Chinese Ambassador in London said: "The sky is black with chickens coming home to roost."

Chamberlain had to declare war on Hitler, but the Tory Dictatorship was incapable of fighting that war effectively. From the outset the British ruling groups suffered from paralysis of will resulting from the inner tension created by their conflicting motives. For twenty years they had pursued policies designed to prevent the transfer of power to the people, not only in Britain, but in Europe and throughout the

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world. Hitlerite Germany, the weapon which they had made such sacrifices to foster, in order to ensure the success of this policy in Europe, was now turned against the British Empire. The only way to defeat Hitler was to arouse the enthusiasm of the people in the workshops and the forces. The Tory Dictatorship were incapable of making the necessary appeal to arouse that mass enthusiasm because to do so meant arousing the people when they believed they should be kept in subjection.

Neither the British nor the French leaders were therefore capable of waging an offensive war. From time immemorial, experience had proved that the best form of defence was attack. For this the decadent British ruling groups, like the French, had substituted a new fallacious doctrine that undermined the efficiency of the army leadership in both countries, viz. that victory could be secured by passive defence. This was the Maginot line mentality that allowed the British and French armies to stand idle behind the Maginot line for eight months, while allowing Hitler first to destroy Poland and then to make his preparations at leisure for the destruction of French and British military power in Europe.

While Hitler was gearing up the productive capacity of Germany for maximum output of war materials, the Tory Dictatorship made "Business as Usual" the slogan for the home front. At home paralysis of the will of the ruling groups resulted in failure to take advantage of the period of phoney war to make good the appalling deficiencies in our military equipment. As a result, when Churchill became Prime Minister, Hitler had vastly increased his superiority, both qualitatively and quantitatively, in weapons of war.

The Navy was efficient, but inadequate in many directions for the tasks that lay ahead. The Air Force qualitatively was efficient, but quantitatively was ridiculously small. The equipment of the Army was negligible both absolutely and relative to the requirements of total war.

The defenders of the Tory Dictatorship have sought to blame both the Labour and the Liberal parties for these disastrous deficiencies. The inescapable truth is that our unpreparedness was the responsibility of the Tory leaders and the Tory leaders alone. From 1932 onwards the Tory Dictatorship had an over-

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whelming majority in the House of Commons. They could therefore have secured whatever sums they needed for rearmament. They did not do so, not because the Labour or Liberal parties objected, or because the people would not tolerate rearmament. They did not rearm because they felt there was no necessity to do so. They were allowing or encouraging the growth of the economic and military strength of Germany as their weapon against Bolshevism and revolution. There was therefore no need to rearm Britain, because Hitler was, in their view, no danger to them.

That the people would have wholeheartedly accepted rearmament if Baldwin had asked for a mandate is not open to question. In the Peace Ballot of 1935, which was accepted even by the Tory Dictatorship as truly representative of the attitude of the whole people, nearly seven million out of 11½ million voted to use military measures against aggressors. The desire of the British people for measures to avoid war was never a "peace at any price" movement. Baldwin and his colleagues misrepresented it to serve their own end. Indeed, when Chamberlain was consummating his betrayal of Czechoslovakia the growing determination of the British people to resist Hitler by force caused the Tory Dictatorship to set out deliberately to undermine the morale of the people in order to reduce them to a "peace at any price" state of mind.

That even in 1939 the real enemy in the minds of the Tory Dictatorship was still Soviet Russia was borne out by events.

On November 26, 1939, the Soviets attacked Finland. As the subsequent peace terms imposed by the victorious Soviets proved, the Russian purpose was to obtain possession of those territories necessary to enable them to defend Leningrad effectively from a possible Nazi offensive. This basic strategic necessity the Soviets had been prepared to achieve by peaceful negotiation.

While a few British voices, including my own, were raised in defence of the Soviets, the British Government went out of its way to supply equipment to Finland and finally was on the point of sending an expeditionary force. Had their dilatoriness and their inefficiency not led to undue delays which allowed Russia to bring the Finnish war to a satisfactory conclusion, then the Tory Dictatorship would have involved us in a war with the Soviets as well as with Hitler.

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This lunatic policy of trying to find ways and means of attacking Russia was not confined to Finland. Plans were also matured for attacking the Russian oil fields around Baku. These plans also came to naught, mainly because Hitler attacked in the West before they could be put into operation.

On April 9, 1940, Hitler seized Norway and Denmark. The British Government, underestimating Nazi military efficiency, sent expeditionary forces to Norway which met with disaster.

After a bitter debate in the House of Commons on Norway on May 7 and 9, 1940, Chamberlain resigned and Churchill became Prime Minister.

CHAPTER IV

CHURCHILL: FROM NATIONAL LEADER TO TORY DICTATOR (1940-1944)

ON Friday, 10th May, 1940, Hitler struck simultaneously at Holland, Belgium and Northern France. On the same day Churchill took over from Chamberlain and became Prime Minister. Both the Labour and the Liberal leaders, with the full support of their parties, agreed to join his Government. By June 3rd, 1940, the British Army had been driven from the continent of Europe; 384,000 British troops were evacuated from the beaches of Dunkirk with the loss of all their arms and equipment. On June 21st, 1940, France surrendered to Germany. Holland, Belgium and France had gone the way of Denmark and Norway. The military disaster was complete. The "classic Doctrine" held by the German General Staff, according to which "Germany cannot accomplish her high destiny in the East until France has been crushed, and, as a consequence, Britain reduced to impotence on the Continent", had been translated into practice.

The British Army having lost the bulk of its equipment on the Continent, Britain stood, for all practical purposes, defenceless, with Hitler occupying the Belgian and French Channel ports. Invasion of Britain was an imminent possibility. Yet the British people never faltered. This was their finest hour. It was also Churchill's finest hour. The courage and tenacity of the people was matched by the courage and tenacity of the leader. In Churchill the British people had secured a leader capable of expressing their determination to resist in spite of lack of weapons and to stick it out until final victory was achieved.

"I have nothing to offer but blood, tears, toil and sweat . . . Our policy? It is to wage war by land, sea and air. War with all our might and with all the strength God has given us, and to wage war against a monstrous tyranny never surpassed in the dark and lamentable catalogue of human crime . . .

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Our aim? It is victory. Victory at all costs—victory in spite of all terrors—victory, however long and hard the road may be, for without victory there is no survival."

In that hour it seemed that a new spirit was born in Britain.

On May 22, 1940, the House of Commons, the overwhelming Tory majority of which stood for preserving the privileges of wealth at the expense of the well-being of the people, passed through all its stages in the course of a single afternoon, a Bill giving the Churchill Government full powers, not only over all persons, but what was a much greater sacrifice for that Tory majority, over all property as well.

In introducing the Bill, Attlee, Lord Privy Seal and leader of the Labour party, said:

"We must throw all our weight into the struggle. Every private interest must give way to the urgent needs of the community.

"... But it is necessary that the Government should be given complete control over persons and property, not just some persons and some particular class of the community, but of all persons, rich and poor, employer and workman, man or woman, and all property. It is these powers for which I am asking the House this afternoon."

No wonder a new spirit seemed born in Britain in the hour of disaster. The wolves were tumbling over themselves to lie down with the lambs. Faced by disaster, the sectional interests were prepared to surrender their privileges in favour of the common interest.

To the people it seemed this war was going to prove different from other wars in that, under the impact of adversity, the privileged sectional interests would combine with the masses to bring about substantial social and economic advances for the people. The threat of invasion seemed to enforce a fundamental national unity which was fitly symbolised by the inclusion of the Liberal and Labour parties in the Government, and the disappearance of any real Parliamentary opposition to what was felt to be a real National Government. That the hopes of the masses were to give way increasingly to frustration before many months were out, that men and women were to be conscripted while property was not, that the war effort was to be

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impeded and final victory delayed, apart from the deeper sociological causes, was due to the character and outlook of Churchill himself.

Churchill's claim to leadership in this most critical hour in British history lay in this: ever since Hitler came into power in 1933 Churchill had pressed for those things vital to the safety of Britain which the nominees of the sectional interests, the Men of Munich, had refused to contemplate. Whenever opportunity arose in speeches or in articles in the press, he advocated effective British rearmament and full support of the League as the means of collective security. In the later stages, sinking his deep hatred of Communism and the Soviets, he pressed for a close defensive alliance with Soviet Russia. He fought Chamberlain's policy of appeasement relentlessly, because it fostered the growth of the economic and military strength of Hitler.

He did all these things for one reason, and one reason only. He realised the threat to the British Empire implicit in Hitler's rise. He was not fundamentally opposed to Fascism. Indeed, his hatred was reserved for Communism and for those who, whether at home or abroad, sought to interfere with the privileges of birth and wealth on behalf of the people. His bitter attacks on the Bolshevik leaders, and his determination to prevent, as far as lay in his power, any contact between Britain and Soviet Russia in the 1920's is too well known to require quotation. His sympathy with Franco and the Spanish rebels in their butchery of the Spanish Republic was given full expression at the opening of the Spanish Civil War. His sympathy for Fascism and the reason for it comes out clearly in a speech he made at Rome on January 20th, 1927:

"I could not help being charmed, like so many other people have been, by Signor Mussolini's gentle and simple bearing and by his calm, detached poise in spite of so many burdens and dangers. Secondly, anyone could see that he thought of nothing but the lasting good, as he understood it, of the Italian people, and that no lesser interest was of the slightest consequence to him. If I had been an Italian, I am sure that I should have been whole-heartedly with you from the start to finish in your triumphant struggle against the bestial appetites and passions of Leninism. I will, however, say a word on an international aspect of Fascism. Externally your

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movement has rendered a service to the whole world. The great fear which has always beset every democratic leader or working-class leader has been that of being undermined or overbid by someone more extreme than he. Italy has shown that there is a way of fighting the subversive forces which can rally the masses of the people, properly led, to value and wish to defend the honour and stability of civilised society. She has provided the necessary antidote to the Russian poison. Hereafter no great nation will be unprovided with an ultimate means of protection against the cancerous growth of Bolshevism."

Churchill, no less than Chamberlain, Hoare or Simon, welcomed Fascist Government as a means of preventing attack upon the privileges of wealth and as a means of preventing the transfer of power from the *élite* of birth or of wealth to the people.

At home he, too, was in the vanguard of the attack to strike the industrial and political weapons from the hands of the people. In 1924, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, he put sterling on the gold standard once again, the effect of which was to bring about unemployment and force wages down. It was to Churchill, who was spoiling for a fight, and Birkenhead, that Baldwin left the drafting of the ultimatum which was designed to force the General Strike on the Labour leaders at the very moment they were agreeing to terms to prevent it. It was Churchill, too, who led the Tory die-hards in their attack upon the India Bill.

Churchill, like the inner circle of the Tory Dictatorship, saw Communism abroad, and the aspirations of the people at home, as the enemy of all for which he stands, but he also saw the growing military strength of Hitler as a menace to the British Empire.

While the threat of invasion persisted, that is, until the Soviets and the United States were attacked and thus brought into the war on our side, Churchill's attitude towards the war coincided with that of the people. They both faced the common enemy, Hitler. The moment the possibility of victory appeared over the horizon his attitude towards the war diverged from that of the people. During the period of true national unity, the people thought they were fighting this war to destroy Fascism and thus achieve the victory of the people everywhere. When ultimate victory appeared probable, even if it were going

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to be long delayed, Churchill was affected by his class loyalties in fighting the war. He had to fight the war in such a way that when he secured victory his class interests were preserved. In other words, from the end of 1941 onwards, his object was to restore the *status quo* in Europe in the sense that the representatives of wealth and birth were to be restored to power and there was to be no transfer of power to the people. Hence his support of Darlan, Badoglio, and the King of Italy, of the King of Yugoslavia and the King of Greece. When the passage of time brings the events of this period into a true historical perspective, it will be realised that these policies, and the strategies that flow from them, converted what should have been a three years' war into a five years' war.

At home his object is similarly to preserve the privileges of wealth and birth from encroachment by the people. While some measure of social and economic reform is necessary to avoid revolution (fear of revolution is always present in the mind of the privileged classes) and to reward the people for their loyal sacrifices during the war, they must not be so substantial or of such a kind as to jeopardise the power and position of the ruling groups.

Without understanding the conflicting motives that dictate Churchill's attitude towards the war and the peace, it is impossible to understand his conduct of the war from the time he became Prime Minister.

It explains his retention in his first Government of the men of Munich, like Chamberlain, Simon and Halifax. It explains his acceptance of the leadership of the Tory party which so profoundly shocked all his supporters with progressive views. It explains the failure of his Government to deal effectively with those sectional interests that continued to impede war production.

But it also explains his broadcast on the 22nd June, 1941, when Hitler attacked Russia:

"We have but one aim and one irrevocable purpose. We are resolved to destroy Hitler and every vestige of the Nazi régime. From this nothing will turn us. Nothing. We will never parley; we will never negotiate with Hitler or any of his gang. Any man or State who fights against Nazism will have our aid. Any man or State who marches with Hitler is our foe. We shall give whatever help we can to Russia and

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the Russian people. If Hitler imagines that his attack on Soviet Russia will cause the slightest division of aims or slackening of effort in the great Democracies who are resolved upon his doom, he is woefully mistaken. His invasion of Russia is no more than a prelude to an attempted invasion of the British Isles. The Russian danger is therefore our danger and the danger of the United States, just as the cause of any Russian fighting for his hearth and home is the cause of free men and free peoples in every quarter of the globe."

Had he not made that broadcast, and allowed the sectional interests time to get going, it is not impossible that their anti-Soviet bias would have profoundly affected the conduct of the war. For that we owe Churchill a debt of gratitude that nothing can repay. He stands a giant amongst the puny intriguers who make up the political scene in Britain to-day, because he had no hesitation in sinking his class interests in the national interest at the most critical turning-point of the war.

On the Home Front, during the latter half of 1941, the sectional interests steadily increased their grip upon the economic life of the nation. Sir Andrew Duncan, the representative of the anti-social and monopolist Iron and Steel Federation, became Minister of Supply. The raw material and other controls were more and more dominated by big business. Their position was such that, under the favourable condition of a Tory-dominated National Government, they could rapidly and quietly complete the transformation of the British economic set-up into a monopolistic capitalist structure.

In August 1941 Roosevelt and Churchill met "somewhere on the Atlantic". The outcome was the Atlantic Charter, published to the world on August 14th, 1941.

This document with its vagueness and grandiloquence at first lulled the critical faculty of the people, but gradually they began to see in it the hotchpotch of stale platitudes which meant nothing, or even worse than nothing. To them the only hope of world peace lay in a world-wide Commonwealth of free men, which would inspire the vanquished people to revolt and would win Germans and Italians to the cause of freedom. Instead, Churchill and Roosevelt stand for the *status quo*. No longer could the British people expect intelligent inspired leadership from its leader.

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To the victims of international anarchy, who knew that peace was impossible as long as States retained their unfettered sovereignty, Churchill promised restoration of full sovereignty. To those who knew from bitter experience that no nation can live safely if it lives alone, he offered "the means of dwelling in safety within their own boundaries". To a world in need of an effective international Army he offered disarmament first of the aggressors. For the rest, there were only negative assurances of non-aggrandisement, self-determination and freedom of the sea. Those who clearly realised, as the British people then realised, the paramount necessity of creating a federation of mankind, were offered "a wider and permanent system of security".

The reason for all this empty verbiage was quickly made clear by Churchill himself. His aims in fighting this war were the aims of the ruthlessly selfish sectional interests of which he became the voluntary prisoner when he accepted the leadership of the Tory party. The Atlantic Charter was not to apply to India and the British Empire, as later he was to make clear it was not to apply to Germany.

At this moment, whatever the outcome of the war, Churchill went far to lose the peace for the British Empire. In a world dominated by power politics—and the Atlantic Charter for all its high phrases condemns the world to a peace based on power politics—the British Empire can only survive as a first-class power on terms of equality with the Soviets and the U.S.A. if it brings into active partnership the democracies of Western Europe and the native races of the Empire, to redress our adverse balance of population. His refusal to allow the Atlantic Charter to apply to the British Empire implies a policy of subjection for the native races. Between dominant race and subject races there can be no partnership, only hatred and burning antagonism such as we find in India to-day.

On the first Sunday in December 1941, without warning, the Japanese destroyed the American fleet in Pearl Harbour. American doubts were resolved. Whether she liked it or not, the U.S.A. was in the war. From the point of view of Churchill and the sectional interests behind the Tory party, the character of the war immediately changed with the entry of the U.S.A. into the war.

The entry of the U.S.A. into the war was, of course, of vital

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importance to the cause of the United Nations. In addition, the British ruling groups were jubilant, because, they mistakenly thought, victory was now certain without Russia coming out of the war as the preponderating influence in Europe. Let Russia and Germany grind each other to impotence in the grim battles on the Eastern Front, while American and British strength is being slowly built up in order to achieve final victory in the West. Moore-Brabazon's only offence was that he publicly expressed the views of the Tory Dictatorship when it was indiscreet to express them. His indiscretion lay in the fact that the British people realised that Russia was fighting their battle, and if we quickly and energetically played our part in the fight in Europe then speedy victory would be achieved. In the early months of 1942 there was growing frustration amongst the British people at the failure to open the Second Front, which culminated in large demonstrations throughout the country. In May Churchill was forced, in spite of his irritation at these demonstrations, to welcome them and identify himself as a Second Fronter. Otherwise his position as leader would have been jeopardised.

In May 1942 Molotov came to this country, and the Anglo-Soviet pact was signed. The official announcement included these words, to allay the agitation for a Second Front:

"Full understanding was reached between the two parties with regard to the urgent tasks of creating a Second Front in Europe in 1942."

As a result of this equivocation, the agitation for a Second Front collapsed because it was now promised, but no Second Front was opened in 1942 or 1943, nor indeed until the sixth month of 1944.

In October 1943, in contradiction to the official announcement of May 1942, Stalin said that there was no agreement on the Second Front and that supplies to Russia were not arriving according to schedule.

Now that victory appeared certain in the form the Tories wanted it, they began to disrupt our national unity by taking measures at home and abroad to resist any threat to their privileges. Cripps's mission of peace to India was sabotaged and the Congress leaders were imprisoned.

In September Churchill, as leader of the Tory Dictatorship,

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rewarded the masses for the heavy sacrifices that they had made in the war by refusing to modify the Trades Disputes Act that had been imposed after the General Strike in 1927. The people were good enough to fight the common enemy: they were not good enough to rule. The industrial weapon must be kept from their hands at all costs.

On the battle fronts, Singapore was followed by the fall of Tobruk. The way in which these two surrenders took place cannot be explained by shortage of equipment, but rather by that thick social crust which confined leadership in the British Army to incompetent but socially "right" people.

In the latter months of the year North Africa was invaded and the country was profoundly shocked by British and American collaboration with the Nazi collaborator Darlan instead of the leader of the Free French, de Gaulle. It became obvious to anyone that the Darlan episode was but a prelude to collaboration with right wing elements everywhere. The Tory-dominated Churchill Government obviously feared "revolution" in Europe, and to avoid a transfer of power to the people in liberated territories, prepared to work even with those elements who had collaborated with the Nazis. The powerful underground movements in Europe which were fighting the Nazis were not to be encouraged unduly. The vital thing was to see that the privileges of wealth and birth were maintained in liberated territories by putting into power the sectional interests in each area. Thus, when Italy was invaded in 1943, no help was given to the active underground movement in Northern Italy, but the Italian King and Badoglio were put into power and A.M.G.O.T. was put into the hands of arch-reactionaries.

King Peter of Yugoslavia and Mihailovitch were backed against Tito for a long time. Only when it was obvious that Tito—in spite of lack of help from Britain and America—was going to dominate the situation in Yugoslavia was help accorded to him. In the same way, the King of Greece and the reactionary Government behind him were backed against the popular Greek underground movement.

At home the Beveridge Report on social security was published in December 1942. It immediately became a best seller and captured the imagination of the British people. Here at last was a method of abolishing want, caused by circumstances

outside the control of the individual, whether through old age, sickness, unemployment or children. But would the Government carry it out? Tory opposition to the Catering Bill, which set out to improve conditions in that most sweated of all trades, the catering industry, indicated that any real concessions to the masses would be resisted.

On February 19th, 1943, the Beveridge Plan was debated in the House of Commons. The two fundamental principles in the plan, without the acceptance of which want would not be abolished, were rejected by the Government. Beveridge insisted that unemployment pay should be paid at subsistence level and as long as a man or woman was unemployed, subject to retraining: this was refused by the Government. Instead, the Government proposed to pay unemployment pay for a limited period, and then, as heretofore, apply the means test. The reasons were obvious. The sectional interests, the City of London, the big industrialists gathered together in the Federation of British Industries, had ruthlessly pursued the policy of economic scarcity before the war, of restricted production, of mass unemployment and low wages. If unemployment pay were adequate to maintain the unemployed man and his family at subsistence level and were payable as long as he was unemployed, the cost of a return to the policy of restricted production and mass unemployment would be such as to make it not worth while. Industry would have to bear too heavy a burden of taxation. Therefore, in their view, unemployment pay must be permitted for only a limited period. Besides, unemployment pay for the full period of unemployment and at subsistence level would force wages to a level higher than subsistence level, and the sectional interests visualise a post-war world in which it will be possible to export only if wages can be reduced below subsistence level.

As I write, the Government have just issued their White Paper on Employment, in which they express their determination to ensure a high and stable level of employment after the war. The only test of their integrity and the only test of whether or not they mean to bring about a high level of employment, which will necessarily interfere with the privileges and freedom of the sectional interests, is whether they are prepared or not to give the unemployed pay at subsistence level the whole time they

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are unemployed. They are not. Speaking in the Beveridge debate on the 16th February, 1943, Sir John Anderson said:

"Now I come to the question affecting both unemployment and disability benefits. Sir William Beveridge proposes that after a period of unconditional unemployment benefit, which he has fixed, subject to certain adjustments, at six months, an unemployed person should be able to continue to draw unemployment benefit, subject to attendance at a work or training centre. The Government agree that training is of the utmost importance. It would secure fluidity of labour, and they do in fact intend, and they have made a beginning, to take all practical steps to develop training schemes. The training schemes would not, however, in the view of the Government, constitute an effective safeguard against the abuse of unemployment benefit, and the Government consider that it would be vitally necessary to introduce some system which would provide a strong check against such abuse. A similar problem arises in respect of disability benefit, and here, too, some means will have to be found to check the abuses inseparable from any system of benefit of fixed amount and unlimited duration. It is the Government's considered opinion that both unemployment and disability benefit will have to be made of limited duration, although the period need not necessarily be the same in every case. There might, for example, be room for the intervention of some suitable tribunal. And in the case of disability benefit an invalidity benefit at pension rates might perhaps be substituted after the prescribed period had elapsed."

The other fundamental principles laid down by Sir William Beveridge, without the adoption of which want could not be abolished, was that all allowances should rise or fall with the cost of living. If allowances are fixed and the cost of living goes up, they at once become inadequate and hardship results, as old age pensioners know to their cost.

This principle also the Government rejected out of hand. In the debate on the 16th February, 1943, Sir John Anderson said:

"I come now to rates of benefit. On this matter also difficult considerations arise. Sir William Beveridge recommended the adoption, as a matter of principle, of the subsistence basis. I recognise that that proposal has certain definite attractions. Apart, however, from the fact that there must always be room for much argument as to what in practice does constitute

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minimum subsistence, the acceptance of the principle would apparently imply the variation of benefits up and down with changes in the cost of living and a corresponding variation, I suppose, in rates of contribution. That seems to the Government, on their present view, to be very difficult if not impracticable in a scheme where benefit is intended to bear a close relation to contributions, and in any case, for reasons which I shall give presently, it could not be applied, in the view of the Government, in regard to old age pensions."

In introducing his Budget on 25th April, 1944, Sir John Anderson said:

"Having regard to the higher domestic costs of production, and also to import costs, I feel that for the ensuing year a range for the cost of living index of 30 per cent. to 35 per cent. over pre-war should be substituted for the 25 per cent. to 30 per cent. laid down by Sir Kingsley Wood in 1941. This will only offset one-quarter of the increase in wage rates which has occurred since he spoke, and it is, I think, in a better and more stable relation to the current facts of wages and prices at home and abroad. I should add that while this should be regarded as the current range, the upper limit is a maximum only, and no substantial increase towards the new higher limit is immediately in view."

In the manipulation of the cost of living which they have now learnt to control, the Tory Dictatorship see the means of depriving the people of the full benefit of those concessions they are forced to give them by way of better allowances and better wages in order to avoid social unrest.

As the year 1943 proceeded, the Tory party, whose prisoner Churchill had so willingly become, showed increasing determination to rob the people of any substantial measure of reform or of any possibility of any transfer of power from the sectional interests to the community as a whole. The 1922 Committee bitterly opposed the appointment by Cripps of Government directors to aircraft manufacturing companies. In March Churchill made the first of his Tory electioneering speeches. At that time he obviously envisaged a coupon General Election, with the leaders of the Labour and Liberal parties as stooges to secure a victory for the Tories, which it will be impossible for the Tories to secure under their own banner. He also prepared to use the canard that the war savings of the people would be in

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danger if a Tory-dominated Government was not returned to power. He was, in other words, preparing to use a variation of "the Post-Office Savings in Danger" story that had contributed so much to the victory of the Tory party in 1931.

This is what he said:

"A friend of mine (Greenwood) said the other day in the House of Commons that 'pounds, shillings and pence were meaningless symbols'. This made me open my eyes. What, then, are we to say about the savings of the people? We have just begun a Wings for Victory War Savings Campaign, to which all classes have subscribed. Vast numbers of people have been encouraged to purchase war savings certificates. Income tax is collected from wage earners at a certain level and carried to a nest egg for them to the end of the war, the Government having the use of the money meanwhile. A nest egg similar in character will be given to the armed forces. Those whose houses have been damaged by air raids and who have in many cases paid insurance are entitled to compensation. All these obligations were contracted in pounds, shillings and pence. . . . The State is built around them, and it is the duty of the State to redeem its faith in an equal degree of value."

All the old Tory tricks are here accepted and dressed up in the rotund phrases of Churchillian oratory.

Osbert Peake, a member of the Government, crystallised the Government opposition to the Beveridge Plan when he said that the talk of the abolition of want cannot be fulfilled except by a system of regimentation such as that in the armed forces or in the internment camp.

The Tory Dictatorship, of which Churchill was now the titular head, realised full well that the art of government for the rich is to conceal the conflict of interests that is the quintessence of politics behind a façade of pretensions supposedly aimed at the general welfare.

There was a growing feeling throughout 1943 that the conduct of the war was dilatory, which was reinforced by a remark of that pillar of the Churchill administration, John Simon, when he described the "Second Front" as a catch-penny phrase.

That there was a worsening in Anglo-Soviet relations was suspected from the way in which the reactionary Polish Government were allowed to carry on their anti-Soviet propaganda

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from this country. In the meantime, the Soviets marched on from Stalingrad to victory after victory, while we seemed to confine our efforts to bombing and our snail-like progress up the backbone of Italy.

During the summer, autumn and winter of 1943 the Red Army in victory after victory drove the once invincible German army out of the greater part of invaded Russia. It became obvious to the most prejudiced observer that even if Britain and the U.S.A. failed to play their part in the battle for Europe, then Russia alone was likely to bring about the final defeat of Hitler in 1944 or 1945.

That meant Soviet domination of Europe, with profound repercussions on the home front in Britain. So in the opening days of 1944, twelve months after Casablanca, with its slogan of unconditional surrender, and seven months after the Quebec conference, at which attention was given to the invasion of Europe, the Second Front became respectable by being admitted to the grand strategy of the Western democracies. For six months the Second Front drum was beaten loud and hard by every Government spokesman. Military preparations for the operation were carried forward with the greatest possible ostentation in the British Isles. Government speakers dwelt again and again on the high cost of the enterprise in casualties.

The fact that the decisive battle for Europe is to be fought in 1944 by Russia in the East and Britain and the U.S.A. in the West of Europe brings to a focus for Churchill and the Tory Dictatorship the problem of the balance of power in Europe after the war. While Britain and America can play some part in defeating the Wehrmacht in Western Europe, the decisive battle must necessarily be fought and won by the Soviets in the East, because the overwhelming majority of German divisions are pinned down by the Red Army. After the victory, therefore, the prestige and power of the Soviets in Europe will outmatch the prestige of Britain and the U.S.A. Moreover, the British Government has been inhibited from appealing to the European masses as a liberating power. To do so would mean supporting the attack on the privileges of the opposite number of the British sectional interests on the continent of Europe.

In his speech on foreign policy in the House of Commons on May 24th, 1944, Churchill disclosed his plans, plans that

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mean that, unless they are modified, Britain will be without friends on the continent of Europe when peace finally comes, except perhaps Scandinavia. On the grounds that all who do not fight against us will receive our support he went out of his way to praise Franco and support the Fascist régime in Spain.

A régime that has a record of even greater cruelty to its own people than the Nazis receives full British support. What a message to the masses of Europe at the moment our armies are invading the Continent! The reluctance to recognise the French Consultative Committee as the provisional Government of France has only reinforced this distrust of British intentions. The support of the Greek King and the use of the British army to suppress the revolution in the Greek army has lost us the possibility of the friendship of the Greek people. The use of the British troops against the Greek mutineers has driven us out of the Balkans. Those whom the gods wish to destroy they first make mad. Churchill has seen to it that Britain shall win the war but stands in the gravest danger of losing the peace.

During the opening six months of 1944 the impending military operation was used as a device for crushing all political opposition on the Home Front, and to facilitate steps to make impossible the transfer of power from the sectional interests to the people when the war is over. Churchill and his fellow members of the Tory Dictatorship felt they were in urgent need of some such device to save the Tory party from the day of reckoning which lay ahead at the first General Election after the war. The Tories to-day are under no delusions. They take a realistic view of the tremendous leftward swing that has taken place in the country.

The Tory party, they realise, is out at the next General Election unless the Liberal and Labour leaders can be used to trick the people into voting for a National Government that will in reality be a Government devoted to protecting the privileges of wealth for the sectional interests. Their problem is that they are precluded by their own inhibitions from making those concessions that would secure for them adequate support from the electorate. How then to retain real power when ultimate political power rests in the hands of the people?

Churchill in March 1944 said:

"There is a large number of respectable and even eminent

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people who are not at all burdened with responsibility, who have a lot of leisure on their hands, and who think most sincerely that the best work they can do at this present time of hard effort and anxiety is to belabour the Government. . . . This National Government which has led the nation and empire and, as I hold, a large part of the world out of mortal danger, through the dark valleys into which they had wandered, largely through their own folly, back on to the broad uplands where the stars of peace and freedom shine, is reviled as a set of dawdlers and muddlers unable to frame a policy or take a decision or make a plan. . . . I know you will not forget that this administration, formed in an hour of disaster by the leaders of the Conservative, Labour and Liberal parties in good faith and goodwill, has brought Britain out of the jaws of death, back from the mouth of hell, while all the world wondered. I know you will not forget that."

Here we have a clear indication of the slogan which will be used by the Tory party to mislead the electorate at the next General Election.

As I pointed out earlier, the sectional interests which are so admirably served by the Tory Dictatorship take a realistic view of the future. They realise that with the fundamental leftward swing of opinion the Tory party is doomed at the next General Election. It may be possible for them to maintain themselves in power if the Labour and Liberal leaders consent to act as stooges to bring about the return of a Tory-dominated National Government. But it is doubtful whether their followers will permit the leaders of the two progressive parties to play this dubious role. Even if they do, it is highly likely that the electorate will see through the trick.

During the course of the last two and a half years, the Tory press, the press of the sectional interests, ably abetted by the Prime Minister and the Government, have set out to destroy the prestige of the House of Commons in the eyes of the people. If the prestige of the House of Commons is undermined it may be possible to substitute a Government appointed by the sectional interests, with a House of Commons acting as a Council of State as a façade to rubber-stamp its decisions.

The first step in reducing the House of Commons to futility was taken when Churchill formed his Government in 1940. The leaders of the three parties went into that Government

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with the support of their followers. As a result, the only opposition was the I.L.P. which was opposed to the war. Instead of the I.L.P. becoming the official opposition, the Labour party, although it was in the Government, continued as the official opposition. Its function was at the same time to support and oppose, which reduced the proceedings of the House to futility. The House could not function, because it is only effective when there is an opposition bringing every act and policy of the Government under the searchlight of ruthless criticism.

When in the Labour and Liberal parties an opposition began to appear, consisting of a few individual members who sought to remove the dead hand of the sectional interests upon the conduct of the war, and who had the courage to criticise even the Prime Minister, the invective of Churchill and the abuse of his yes-men were employed to discredit the individuals concerned. As almost the whole of the press was in the hands of the sectional interests, the press too played its part in this campaign. The members of this small opposition which, having regard to its numbers, has been highly effective and has kept the reputation of Parliament alive, have been described as hot-heads who criticise for criticism's sake, and as being prompted by personal animus against the Prime Minister. Nothing could be further from the truth. There is no more thankless task. There is no function which more definitely stands in the way of personal advancement than to carry out the function of opposition when that opposition in the House is infinitesimal in numbers.

The latest attack on the prestige of the House was made by Churchill when the Government was defeated over the question of equal pay for men and women for equal work. He threatened to leave his post at the very moment when the final preparations for the Second Front were being made, if the House did not reverse its decision forthwith. That action of his made a substantial contribution towards destroying the prestige of the House in the country, and is an illuminating commentary upon his often repeated lip service to the cause of parliamentary democracy.

However, while there are a few men left in the House of Commons determined to stick to their principles, it will be no easy task for the anti-democratic leaders of the sectional interests

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to destroy finally the power of the House of Commons to make and unmake Governments at will.

So another policy is also being pursued in order to ensure that Britain shall be safe for the privileges of wealth, even should the Labour party be returned to power at the next General Election. Having destroyed the political weapon of the people by forming the National Government in 1931, the completion of the task would be to make the leadership of the Labour party serve the interests of wealth and birth, even if it should become the Government at the next General Election.

The introduction of Defence Regulation 1 A (a) by Ernest Bevin was the vital step towards achieving this end. Bevin's excuse for introducing Regulation 1 A (a) was the strikes in the Yorkshire and South Wales coal-fields, and of the apprentices on the north-east coast. That the miners were justified in striking was proved by the fact that the strikes were settled by the Government remedying the anomalies which caused the strikes. The carefully planned campaign by the Government suggesting that these strikes were caused by outside agitators, "Trotskyists", was therefore obviously untrue. The strikes were due to the just grievance of the miners. In fact, for three years the Government had been warned again and again that there would be serious trouble in the coal-fields unless they drastically reorganised the industry. This they were not prepared to do, because to get the coal necessary for winning the war meant interfering with deeply entrenched sectional interests. In their view it was better to hamper the war effort than allow the privileges of the sectional interests to be interfered with at so vital a point. The press, being in the hands of the sectional interests, did not report these warnings, and, therefore, under war conditions it was impossible to organise public opinion to bring pressure upon the Government to do its plain duty. The Government, therefore, needed scapegoats for the mess it made of the mining industry through refusal to face up to fundamental reorganisation. The Communist bogey had been used to frighten the country into giving the Government power in the past to further the sectional interests at the expense of the people. To-day, the war effort of the Soviets has made it impossible to raise the Communist bogey. The people would only laugh. So the Trotsky bogey is being created to take its place.

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But there was more to it than that. The relations between the Trade Union bureaucracy and big business are close and confidential. It favours a syndicalist organisation of industry whereby capital and organised Labour would divide monopoly profits between them at the expense of the community. Big business and the Trade Union officials can only carry out their plans if the Trade Union officials can control their members. But when the Trade Union organisation is highly centralised, the leadership gets out of touch with the rank and file. An ever-widening gulf yawns between the top and the bottom. The top makes agreements which the bottom refuse to implement. The bottom makes demands which the top ignore. It is with the Central Executive of the Trade Unions that the Government and the employers make terms. When the rank and file of the Union revolt against their leaders then the three—Government, Employers and Leaders—get together to protect the authority of the Labour leaders. The Trade Union leaders having made terms with big business, now call in the State to protect them against the revolt of their own members. This Tory-dominated Government, concerned to protect the privileges of wealth, was only too ready to comply. If the Labour movement could be clamped down under the Trade Union bureaucracy, in view of their agreement with big business, it would not matter if a Labour Government did get into power after the war. The bureaucracy dominating the Labour party would be pursuing the same objects as the Tory Dictatorship. They would be intent on preserving the privileges of big business in order to obtain a cut for their followers out of the monopoly profits, at the expense of the community.

The attempt to create this Big-Business-Trade-Union Front is being made now while war and the opening of the Second Front make it possible to call resistance to it "unpatriotic".

Regulation 1 A (a) is the instrument for this purpose. What this regulation does is to make it illegal to organise or suggest a strike if it is done by anyone but an official of a Trade Union. Strikes organised by Trade Union officials are legal. Strikes organised by shop stewards, for instance, not incorporated under the A.E.U., are illegal. The membership of the Trade Unions is between seven and eight millions. There are thirteen million workers outside the Trade Unions who cannot legally

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strike, however just their grievances. If these thirteen millions could be forced into the Unions, Big Business and the Trade Union bureaucracy would have their organised front, without which they cannot achieve their aim of the Corporate State holding the community up to ransom.

Care, too, was taken at the Philadelphia Conference of the International Labour Organisation by the British delegation to preserve Britain from commitments that might affect the march towards the Corporate State and the organisation of Britain as a home for big business. The *New Statesman* (May 20th, 1944) reports:

"The British Government delegates were the centre of the chief storm, and there was a general attack upon them in the middle of the Conference as deliberately obstructionist; they were widely accused of trying to sabotage the claim of the I.L.O. to become an instrument of post-war reconstruction.

"The attitude of the British delegation was, from any standpoint, lamentable. We have no doubt that it was, and was intended to be, obstructive; it was carrying into the international sphere the obstinate refusal of the Churchill Government to commit itself to any social policy."

CHAPTER V

HOW TO DEFEAT THE TORY DICTATORSHIP

FOR the British masses the lesson of the period between the two World Wars is clear. At the next General Election the power of the Tory party must be utterly destroyed. To anyone who has read the analysis in the preceding pages of Tory policies and actions from 1919 to 1944, the reasons are surely obvious. I briefly recapitulate them here. During those twenty-five years alike in their home and foreign policies the Tory party has pursued one aim and one aim only: the preservation of the privileges of wealth at the expense of the people who comprise 95 per cent. of the electorate. To achieve their aim they first set out to provoke the General Strike in 1926 in order to destroy the industrial weapon. In 1931, by their manipulation of the financial crisis, they blunted the political weapon of the people. They were then free to pursue the "economics of scarcity", the policy of restricted production, in order to preserve the existing capital structure upon which the British economy is based. That this policy meant misery and degradation for millions of their fellow countrymen and women was of no account in their calculations. That the destruction of productive capacity, such as shipbuilding, made redundant by this policy, meant that the country was placed in the gravest danger in the event of war was also of no importance in their estimation.

In their foreign policy, they pursued their aim also with a singleness of purpose that neglected every consideration upon which the safety of the nation depended. Soviet Russia had to be destroyed at all costs, because as long as it existed it meant that at least one people had successfully destroyed the privileges of wealth and birth. When intervention and economic blockade failed to destroy the growing strength of the Soviets, they actively encouraged the economic and military rehabilitation of Hitlerite Germany, so that Hitler could become strong enough to "eat bear" by attacking the Soviets. Fascist governments, wherever they appeared, in Italy, Spain or Greece, must be supported by British influence so that successful revolution of

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the people against their oppressors should not be spread beyond the borders of Russia and thus bring the bad example of Russia nearer home. Even Churchill said that Fascism "provided the necessary antidote to the Russian poison. Hereafter no great nation will be unprovided with an ultimate means of protection against the cancerous growth of Bolshevism." When war did break out in 1939, the Tory Dictatorship under Chamberlain was unable to fight against Hitlerite Germany effectively. In the first place they suffered paralysis of the will, because on the basis of their preconceived ideas they were fighting the wrong enemy. With Fascism as such they had no quarrel. Their aim was to destroy Bolshevism. Throughout the period of the phoney war they were unable to wage war vigorously because they felt in their innermost being, however little they would admit it, that accommodation with Hitler would be possible before things had gone too far. They therefore waited like cattle for the slaughterer to use his knife in his own good time. At home they were unable to deal ruthlessly with the sectional interests in order to maximise war production with the utmost speed. Faced by the overthrow of France and the ejection of all British forces from the continent of Europe, with imminent invasion hanging over their heads, they temporarily abandoned their control over the levers of power to the indomitable will of the people acting through its chosen instrument, Churchill. With the entry, first of Soviet Russia and then of the United States, into the war, their determination to protect the privileges of wealth and social position revived. While Hitler as a threat to the British Empire must be destroyed, victory must be secured in such a way as to prevent any transfer of power from the ruling groups of Europe to the people. To this end victory was delayed and collaboration, with the real anti-Fascist forces in Europe, the underground movements, was, to say the least, hesitant. As ultimate victory came closer, the process of bolstering up the ruling groups of Europe became obvious to all. Co-operation with Darlan, Giraud, Badoglio, the Kings of Yugoslavia and Greece and, finally, full support of Franco, administered shock after shock to world opinion and disillusioned the people of this country as to our real war aims. At home, as ultimate victory became certain and came nearer, the Government had necessarily to

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disclose its hand on its policies for the return to peace. By the rejection of the Beveridge Plan, their handling of the land question and housing, they showed their determination that social reform must under no circumstances interfere with the freedom of the sectional interests to maintain their position at the expense of the community.

Throughout the years 1919-1944 the Tory party has been faced by one fundamental difficulty in its policy of making Britain and the world safe for the sectional interests. Under our system of parliamentary democracy, ultimate political power is entirely in the hands of the people, the people without wealth, property or privileges to defend. Unless the Tory party could persuade the poor to vote for it at General Elections, a Government ruling this country in the interests of the people at the expense of the privileges of wealth must ultimately result. The Tory party relied upon the willingness of the people to sacrifice their own interests in the interest of the country, upon their patriotism, in order to cheat them and bring about a progressive worsening of the conditions under which they lived. Having been defeated on a straightforward statement of Tory policy in 1924, they decided never again to go to the country on Tory policies. Patriotic issues were first substituted. The fraudulent Zinoviev letter was used as a peg on which to hang the appeal to which the British people will always respond: "The country in danger". Later a deliberate misrepresentation, that Post Office Savings would be in danger if Labour were returned to power, was used. Finally, in 1935, the Government went to the country on a policy of full support of the League of Nations when, in fact, it was pursuing a policy to destroy the League. To attack one's own policies in speeches and propaganda in order to get votes is the lowest depth of political dishonesty. It is treason to democracy. To those depths the Tory party descended. They also introduced the building up of personalities as the substitute for statements of policies to win elections. "Trust Baldwin" was followed by "Trust Chamberlain". Now the cry is "Trust Churchill", and when Churchill goes—"Trust Whom"?

No, the Tory party must not be returned to power at the next General Election. It must be broken so that it can never raise its head again. The anti-Tory feeling in the country is

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strong and is growing stronger. Not even Churchill's name is likely to save them.

To be anti-Tory is purely negative. If the Tory party and all that it stands for is to be finally destroyed, a negative approach is wholly inadequate, a positive approach is vital. To this end two questions must be answered. What do the common people want? What instrument is available to which the carrying out of those policies can be entrusted so that in the process the people are not defrauded of their desires?

What do the people of this country want? They want the things that are desired by the people everywhere. To anyone who has close contact with the men and women in the armed forces and with the men and women in our industrial army the answer is clear, provided one's capacity for realistic investigation is not clouded by preconceived ideas. The people of Britain have the following deep-seated desires:

- equal opportunity for every human being to fulfil his individuality
- social security
- the certainty of a job
- a decent home in which to live
- a rising standard of living
- the end of war
- the will of the people to prevail.

It is necessary to consider each of these in more detail.

Although each has a fundamental desire to fulfil his individuality, the overwhelming majority of the people place economic security first. In this they are right, because it is impossible for any man to develop his personality to the full if he is haunted by a fear that at some point he will not be able to secure adequate food, clothing and shelter for himself and his dependants. To the ordinary man freedom becomes less important than filling his belly, if his belly is empty and his children starve. Nevertheless he suffers from a continuous sense of frustration and doubt of the value of life, if the social system under which he lives restricts the expression of his personality.

What are the conditions necessary to give every citizen an equal opportunity to fulfil his individuality? First, there are those freedoms through which society recognises the dignity of human personality. Freedom of speech and of the press to

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enable every citizen to express what is in his mind fully and freely to his fellow citizens. Freedom of assembly, so that every citizen can meet freely with his fellow citizens for political or any other kind of discussion and for religious purposes. Freedom from arbitrary arrest by the executive without trial by independent judges and juries of his fellow citizens. Freedom to travel where he will throughout the world without interference from the State. All these freedoms are vital to the individual citizen, and they are to be guarded at all costs from encroachment by the State.

These freedoms are the basis of our political democracy. They can accurately be described as the political freedoms.

To these political freedoms must be added, if the common man is to be able to fulfil his individuality, social and economic freedom too. By social freedom I mean social equality, which is something we have never enjoyed in this country, and the lack of which in Britain is a demonstrable bar to our national well-being and a source of frustration to the common man. Probably up to the opening years of the twentieth century there was, from the point of view of the community, considerable justification for a social system based upon gross social inequalities. In the old days the technique of production was so elementary and inefficient that the work of the whole community did not produce enough commodities, food, clothing, fuel and shelter to keep the whole community above the poverty line. If the product of the labour of the community had been equally distributed, every single citizen would have had to concentrate on procuring for himself a bare sufficiency of the necessities of life. No one would have had the leisure to learn, to think, to carry out researches, to acquire even the arts of administration, organisation and government. Without a class with the leisure and the wealth to do these things, civilisation would not have advanced. Inventions designed to increase the productivity of human labour, science, the arts that lend grace and dignity to life, would not have developed. To-day the situation is wholly different. As a result of the last war and even of this war, and of developments in technique in the intervening period, the productivity of human labour has increased so enormously that, if we do not waste it by maintaining a large body of enforced unemployed, there is an ample margin of commodities available

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above the volume required to supply the necessities of life. The economic justification for the community to safeguard a narrow ruling class to breed its leaders by imposing social inequalities has disappeared. Indeed, the continuance of inequalities in our social system has in this generation produced so serious a dearth of leaders in relation to our requirements as to have very nearly lost us the war. Moreover, the leaders that have been produced have proved unable to adapt themselves to the fundamental changes in the world around them. Bluntly stated, the British ruling classes have become decadent. Decadence is not a process of physiological deterioration. It is rather a process of intellectual deterioration, a paralysis of the will induced by the conflict between immutable preconceived ideas and a changing world. Decadence in a class is the inability of that class to adapt itself to the changes in its environment. Why the British ruling classes have become decadent is not hard to understand. At the beginning of the nineteenth century it was still an aristocracy of birth based on the ownership of land. The industrial revolution produced an aristocracy of wealth which clamoured for admission into the ruling class. By their acceptance of the Reform Bill of 1832, the aristocracy of birth admitted the industrial aristocracy of money into the ruling class of this country. This infused a new vigour into the ruling class by absorbing into its ranks the leaders who had created the new environment based on the industrial revolution. As a result the British ruling classes of the nineteenth century were adequate to their task and provided leadership that resulted in great achievements of benefit to the whole community. Although their leadership led to excessive prosperity for the few and excessive poverty for the many, it also, through developments in the technique of production, succeeded in raising the standard of living for all. In seeking to benefit themselves, the ruling classes in the nineteenth century felt they were also benefiting the community.

With the twentieth century there was a vital change. The capitalist free enterprise system began to transform itself into monopoly capitalism. The primary concern of the British ruling groups began to be how to ensure the safety of their capital rather than to risk it in free enterprise. Restriction of production rather than expansion of production was

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their only possible policy in the inter-war years, because the output of each worker was increasing at an accelerating rate owing to technological advances in management and production. To absorb this increased output it was necessary to increase the consuming capacity of the common people by raising wages as productivity increased. The ideology of the sectional interests prevented them from making this short-term sacrifice to secure the stability of the economic system. Consequently mass unemployment became a permanent feature of the economic system of this country. Instead of organising abundance as they had in the past to the benefit alike of themselves and of the community, the aristocracy of wealth, in order to protect their capital, organised scarcity to the detriment of the community. Thus they lost faith in themselves and were profoundly conscious that the masses were beginning to question their right to lead because of their anti-social tendencies. The idea which informed their leadership up to 1914, that the end of society was to fulfil the inherent dignity of human personality, gave way to the idea that the masses were unfit for power. Yet the Labour party at home was rapidly gaining strength and was the instrument of the masses for seizing political power. Abroad the Russian masses seized power in the Bolshevik Revolution. The only way out the British ruling classes could see was at all costs to suppress the rising power of the masses. The symbol of their moral bankruptcy was their readiness to accept Fascism in Europe by supporting the gangster rule of Hitler and Mussolini, to support the vested interests and cow the masses into subjection. The other symbol of their decadence was that, side by side with increasing technological mastery, there was a growing army of millions of unemployed. That there were men available who were capable of effecting the necessary reorganisation of our social and economic life so that the abundance flowing from modern production methods could be distributed by means of improving standards of living for all, cannot be doubted; but this new *élite* were prevented from playing their part, because the only path to power and leadership lay through acceptance into the social hierarchy, and the chief key to social advancement was wealth.

Throughout these critical years as before, most of the key positions, not only in Government but in industry, were reserved

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for men who had been through the public schools. The function of the public schools was to instil the code of the ruling classes, "to produce leaders", and entry depended on ability to pay the heavy fees. By this means the children of the newly rich were moulded to the correct pattern. It may be true that the battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton. It can equally be said that Czechoslovakia, Austria, Denmark, Norway, France, Holland and Belgium and Singapore were lost there. In the atmosphere of our public schools the new generation of our rulers were moulded in the pattern of the past to lead a world that had gone beyond recall, and which precluded them from adapting themselves to a changed environment in which they would be called on to exercise leadership. While sons of the poor could by scholarships, privation and hard work fight their way through to leadership, the opportunities were few and far between. Besides, such opportunities were only successfully seized at the expense of the spontaneity of the bright son of the people, and by his willingness to adapt himself to the outworn code of the ruling classes. The leaders who could have led this country to ultimate victory in the first two and a half years of this war, and who could have destroyed Hitler and Mussolini without a war, are, because of our system of confining power to narrow social groups, performing manual tasks in our fields, mines and workshops.

That this view is fundamentally right is borne out by Russian experience, and this the British masses recognise. There the basis of the individual's place in society is not status or wealth, but function. The educational system is so integrated with the working world as to ensure the possibility of the innate qualities of every man and woman being so developed as to enable them to make their maximum contribution to society. Having destroyed the *élites* of birth and wealth, the Soviets within twenty-five years produced an *élite* for leadership in the armed forces, economic organisation and government, which this war conclusively proves to be superior to the leaders thrown up by the decadent ruling classes in Britain.

If Britain is to survive it can do so only by drawing on the people for leadership. Power must go to those who prove their ability to use it, not to those with the social status to monopolise it. Our present system of social inequality must give way to

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social equality. The Field Marshal's baton, or the Permanent Secretaryship to the Foreign Office, must be carried as much in the satchel of the dustman's son as in that of the younger son of a peer.

The first step towards social equality must be equality of educational opportunity. The public schools in their present form must go, because their fundamental aim is to give their victims a sense of social superiority. No one should be able to buy education. The education one gets should be solely dependent on the innate qualities of the individual which need development to enable him or her to make their maximum contribution to the life of the community. Equality of educational opportunity which is vital if the British nation is to obtain the leadership necessary for its survival does not mean uniformity of education. What is required is an educational system closely integrated with the life of the community in all its aspects and which enables all members of the community to develop their special qualities to the full.

To me the universal praise accorded to the Government's Education Bill is a scathing commentary upon the existing political leadership to which the people are asked to look for their advancement. While the Government expresses the intention of raising the school leaving age of all to 16 at some unspecified date, its main purpose is to perpetuate the existing social inequalities in education. The public schools are not dealt with, and when they are it will probably be found that the intention is to maintain them out of public funds as the bottleneck through which the leadership of the country must filter. The main passport to power will still be wealth and social caste, but to justify the use of public funds, a limited inflow of the children of the poor will be arranged. These children will then be moulded to be ashamed of their own origins and to conform to the social standard of the ruling classes.

To destroy social inequality, equality of educational opportunity is not enough. Those symbols of social hierarchy, titles, must also go. The individual's position in society must depend upon the function he performs and not upon his social status. As a symbol of the change from social inequality to social equality the House of Lords must be abolished, to be replaced

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by a Second Chamber the composition of which is not based on hereditary rights.

In themselves the political freedoms and social equality are not enough. We must achieve economic freedom too. Indeed, without economic freedom political freedom will disappear and our social inequalities will become increasingly based on wealth. The fundamental basis of economic freedom for the masses, the common man and woman, is freedom from the fear of want arising from causes that lie outside their own control. That is why the Beveridge Plan became a best seller when it was published in December 1942. It stirred the imagination of the masses and revived their hope for their own future which had been destroyed in the years when the "economics of scarcity" actuated the ruling groups of this country. That reviving hope was shattered once again when the Government made it clear that it was going to substitute for the Beveridge Plan to abolish want, a series of allowances designed to buy the support of the electorate at the next General Election. Willink said the Government was going to out-Beveridge Beveridge. What he meant was that the Tory party are going to outbid the progressive parties by offering bigger allowances for the time being, but without committing themselves for the future. Want can be abolished only if the allowances during illness, old age, unemployment and for children are tied to the cost of living and are at subsistence level.

In just the same way the Government White Paper on Employment Policy is an electioneering device to persuade the masses to vote against their own interest for a Tory-dominated House of Commons. Once they are in power they will continue down the slippery slope of being thoroughly dishonest in their public life. Had they had any intention of bringing about a state of even reasonably full employment after the war, they would not have hesitated to give proof of their intention by adopting the other fundamental principle of Beveridge that unemployment pay must be paid as long as a man or woman is unemployed. Instead they will only pay unemployment pay for a limited period, because they can see themselves reverting to restricted production within very few years of the end of the war.

That want and unemployment can be abolished is fully accepted by the masses. From their point of view there is no

need to argue the matter. That they expect neither want nor unemployment to be abolished under a Tory régime arises from their correct assessment of the unwillingness of the ruling groups of this country to make the necessary sacrifices of their class interests as a contribution to the well-being of the community.

The increased productivity of labour was so accentuated by technological development during and after the last war that the anti-social ruling groups that make the Tory party were able to keep a large body of unemployed, running into several millions, out of the surplus over necessities produced even under their policy of restricted production, of preventing people working. That this ever-increasing output could be fully absorbed by relating wages to the increasing productivity of labour is beyond the comprehension of the decadent British ruling groups. It is necessary to combine with a policy of high wages to produce full employment a system of social security such as the Beveridge Plan, so that all those who cannot work because of illness, old age, temporary unemployment, or who perform the important social service of producing children, can be supported at a level of subsistence. Moreover, with the increased technological mastery resulting from this war, combined with a policy of full employment, an undreamed-of increase in the standard of living can be obtained.

In other words, the abolition of want and a rapidly improving standard of living depend upon the carrying out of a policy of full employment for keeping all our people at work producing. But to carry out a policy of full employment means using the power of the State to control finance and industry. This does not mean the end of private enterprise. It means definition of the boundaries between State and private enterprise so that each can function effectively within its own sphere. I emphasise that this does not mean the abolition of private enterprise. On the contrary, it means opening up a new era of prosperity for private enterprise in those fields of industry and agriculture from which monopolistic practices can be eliminated. It means, however, interference with the privileges of wealth, with the freedom of sectional interests to protect themselves at the expense of the community, and it means redistribution of the national income. Those sectional interests, as the history of the last twenty-five years has shown, have been prepared to descend to any depths of dishonesty to use the power of the State

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to protect their wealth. What they fear is the use of the power of the State to protect the community.

That the Churchill Government, dominated as it is by these sectional interests, is not prepared to use the power of the State in the interests of the community is proved by the White Paper on Employment Policy. This is what the *Observer* (Sunday, June 4th, 1944) says of this White Paper:

"Plainly this is not a policy of full employment, as critics have pointed out. Even in times of prosperity, before the war, the proportion of workers unemployed was high. There is no intention, in the policy outlined, to take positive steps to provide jobs at all times for all workers, by ensuring that the real needs of the people for housing, health, education, and good living are continuously met, to the exclusion, if need be, of demands for less essential things.

"Indeed, housing and other public works are, in fact, to be used as the variable factor in total investment, to move up or down according to the state of trade, and not according to real social need. And the system of priorities in the use of national resources, in order to maintain and improve the standard of life, together with the pegging of the cost of living, is apparently to end with the transition from war to peace."

To maintain and improve the standard of life, to provide jobs for all, means establishing a system of priorities. To establish a system of priorities in the interests of the community means Government direction of what industry produces, it means Government control of what we import so that first things come first. It means coming to terms with the Trade Unions so that restrictions on the output of their members are removed.

Rather than face this issue, because to come to terms with the workers means high wages and security for the workers besides control of industry in the interest of the community, the Tory Dictatorship prefers to condemn the returning ex-service men and women to the intolerable standard of the Churchill steel house. What the service men think of these abortions is shown by the following conversation between four wounded soldiers in my division who were looking at an illustration of the Churchill house in a Sunday paper:

"The first said: 'A — incinerator in summer and an ice-box in winter.'

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"Another said: 'Where will my two kids sleep? The boy is 12 and the girl 10.'

"The third replied: 'In the — bath.'

"The fourth said very loudly: 'I'd like to lock up Churchill, Portal and Beaverbrook in one for all August, and they could be gassed by Churchill's 3s. 6d. cigars.'"

To meet the intolerable housing situation, prefabricated houses will be required, but they should conform to adequate standards as regards living space and other amenities. An adequate housing programme implies control and planning. It means, above all, a land policy which will place the land of this country unrestrictedly at the service of the people.

Jobs for all, the *Observer* rightly says, means ensuring the real needs of the people for housing, health, education and good living, to the exclusion if need be of demands for less essential things. But our peace-time industry is organised on a fundamentally different basis.

T. W. Arnold in his introduction to *Germany's Master Plan* says:

"In all commercial civilisation great industries rise out of initiative and superior efficiency. At a certain stage in their growth, hardening of the arteries takes place. Industrial leaders believe that the time has come to rationalise and stabilise production. Restricted production, high cost and low turnover become the order of the day. To maintain that order, new industry must be kept out of production and old industry must not produce too much, because, according to this order of ideas, too much goods is not wealth but distress goods and an undesirable surplus. Prices and production become fixed at levels which will pay dividends on an existing capital structure."

The objection of the British sectional interests who are committed to these policies is not to "control and planning". They control and plan themselves in their own selfish interests against the community. Their objection is to control and planning by the State in the interests of the community.

To base our national economy on the needs of the people would mean the creation of new industries and the disappearance of old ones. It would mean interference with the existing capital structure. Much of that capital structure would become re-

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dundant and therefore worthless to its owners. In its place would rise a new capital structure over which they would have no control.

It would mean the development of our national resources for the community in a way hitherto undreamed of. For instance, the production of power at the pitheads on the coal-fields, the building-up of heavy electro-chemical industries in suitable coal-fields, the Severn barrage scheme. Location of industry should not be confined to assisting the derelict areas. It should mean the integration of light industries with a revived agriculture, the prosperity of which is based not on insecure subsidies but on the ability of the masses to buy adequate quantities of milk, home-grown meat, vegetables and fruit to maintain themselves and their dependants in full health, strength and energy. To do these things both power and transport would need to be owned by the community. Power must cost the same everywhere. Transport rates must be equalised. Otherwise industry tends to concentrate near its main market, which means London. The railways need far-reaching reorganisation with fewer stops and with motor transport acting as feeders to the railways. The land, mines, railways, the Bank of England and probably the joint-stock banks, would all need to be taken over by the community to permit the fundamental reorganisation required. Private enterprise would then be freed from the restrictions imposed on it by these actual or tacit monopolies.

Whether the desire of the masses for the abolition of want, jobs for all, decent homes, and a rising standard of living can be achieved, depends entirely on putting into power at the next General Election a Government determined to control and plan our industrial and commercial organisation in the interests of the community by directing it towards satisfying the real needs of the people. It must be a Government determined to deal ruthlessly with the sectional interests if they attempted to sabotage the change. The machinery of Government and the Civil Service must also be overhauled to provide adequate means for such a Government to carry out the will of the people.

However effectively Germany is dealt with when this war is over, we shall be faced with another World War within the next fifteen years, and more probably within the next ten years, unless

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the "real power and property in the Government" is taken out of the hands of the sectional interests and transferred to the people.

If we are determined to end war—and World Wars can be ended at any rate for many years to come—we, the British people, can do so. We can do it by destroying the instrument which the sectional interests have used for the last 25 years to protect the privileges of wealth.

In the earlier pages of this book I have traced the story of our foreign policy between the two wars. That story is a story of ruthless selfishness by the British ruling groups for which they cannot evade responsibility before the bar of history, or before the people of this country when they are compelled to submit themselves for re-election.

At the end of the last war Germany was beaten to the ground. Anglo-French military strength was such that they could impose their will on Europe. The League of Nations was in existence to deal with any power that threatened the peace of Europe or of the world. That the United States refused to take her place in the League did not affect the issue. Britain and France were so overwhelmingly strong that without the United States they could have made the League work. That they did not do so was due primarily to the desire of the British ruling groups to build up the strength of Germany and Japan to destroy what they called the Bolshevik menace. Japan's act of aggression against China in Manchukuo was supported by John Simon. When the anti-Bolsheviks, Mussolini and Hitler, were put into power by the sectional interests of their own countries to cow their own people, the Tory leaders lent them every support, even to protecting them against their own mistakes. Hitler could have been stopped for all time when he entered the Rhineland, when he went into Austria, even when he annexed Sudetenland, but the Tory leaders would allow nothing to stand in his way. He must be allowed to go on so that he, in Chamberlain's words, could "eat bear". Under the cloak of Hitler and Mussolini it was the British ruling groups who were ruthlessly driving towards an aggressive attack upon the people everywhere, but especially in Britain. To-day the Tory story is that the German people must be ruthlessly broken up so that they cannot again regain their strength. Aggressive the German people have been and they have unquestionably allowed them-

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selves to become the tool of those who wished to use their war-like virtues for their own ends, but then so have the British people in allowing the Tory Dictatorship to deceive them. Vansittartism is merely an effort by the British ruling groups to transfer their share of responsibility for this war on to the shoulders of the German people. If we allow them to do so, then we shall quickly be involved in another war, because they must continue their aggressive drive against the people of the world.

The first step towards ending the threat of another war, then, is to make the Tory party impotent for mischief.

International organisation for peace is a vital necessity. But clearly an international organisation for world peace of the kind envisaged by Churchill, even if it had armed forces placed at its disposal, would not help. The history of the League of Nations during the inter-war years proved that such an international organisation is merely a convenient façade behind which the British ruling groups and others of their kind will play power politics to preserve the privileges of wealth at the expense of the people. It provides them with a means of deceiving the British electorate into the belief that the British ruling groups are working for peace, when, in fact, they are working for war. Besides, Churchill has already disclosed the ends to which he and his collaborators are working. Inspired by a profound distrust of the people everywhere, including the British, he is endeavouring to use the war to plant the old sectional interests in the seats of power in every European country which Britain can influence. Franco, Badoglio, the reluctance to recognise the French Committee of Liberation, the support of the King of Greece against the Greek underground movement, even to the extent of using British forces to fire upon the Greek Army, all indicate that Churchill is still inspired by his old enmity towards the people. These policies also indicate clearly the policies which the Tory Dictatorship would pursue if they secured a new international organisation for peace beneath which to cloak their designs against the well-being of the British and European people.

To allow Churchill and the Tory party to carry these policies into the peace means another war within very few years.

How, then, is the end of war to be secured? War can be ended, as I keep repeating, if the British masses extirpate the Tory party at the next General Election and put into office a Government

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that will transfer the "real power and property" in the State from the sectional interests to the people.

That in itself will create the necessary confidence in Europe and, what is of more importance, in the Soviet Union, for taking those steps without which the ending of war is impossible. Even in war, when close alliance between Russia and Britain is vital to achieve final victory at the earliest possible moment, it is impossible for the Tory Dictatorship to bring it about. The Tory Dictatorship and the sectional interests behind them still regard Russia as the fundamental enemy. The Soviet leaders know that the British ruling groups are still motivated by the ideology which inspired their hostility towards Russia in the inter-war years, and which led them to encourage Hitler to build up his military strength to march to the East. The only basis upon which an enduring peace can be built in Europe is full collaboration between Britain and the Soviets based upon complete mutual confidence. That can be achieved only by putting into power in Britain a Government determined to pursue policies at home, in the Empire and in Europe directed towards making Britain, the Empire, Europe and the world safe and fit for the common people everywhere to live in.

Why close collaboration with the Soviets, instead of the United States of America, as the Tory party desires? Because at the present moment in world history a close Anglo-American alliance is an illusion. The Tory argument for a close alliance of the English-speaking people is that they can dominate the world for peace. If the common people of this country and of America could get together, they would be a tremendous factor in ensuring world peace. But that is not what the Tory party mean by an Anglo-American alliance. They see that if they can come to terms with America, the U.S.A. and Britain combined will be an all-powerful combination for preserving the privileges of wealth throughout the world at the expense of the people everywhere. Indeed, to achieve this end Churchill at the time of the first Quebec Conference suggested joint British-American citizenship, although that would have meant the end of British culture and traditions, because we would only be absorbed into the American corpus. We are relatively too small to be an equal partner.

America at the end of this war will be dominated by big

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business which will possess the real power and property in the Government of the U.S.A. That means that America will be ruthlessly aggressive in the post-war world in defence of the privileges of wealth. Like the British ruling groups American big business will be carrying on a desperate fight to preserve itself from extinction. Its failure to handle the breakdown in the American economy in 1929 led to the New Deal by which Roosevelt set out to use the power of the State to remould the American economic system in the interests of the people. He did not go very far, but American business men fear an extension of the New Deal that will further interfere with their privileges to exploit their fellow men. The prosperity brought to the United States by the war has provided them with an opportunity of securing a political set-up in the U.S.A. which, even if Roosevelt becomes President for a fourth term, will permit them to run the United States in the interests of big business. To keep themselves in power they must, when the war is over, carry the war-time state of full employment into peace. They cannot achieve this by a planned economy because their ideological prejudices force them to reject all planning by the State. Part of the productive capacity, surplus to home requirements, they intend to absorb in supplying capital goods on a gigantic scale to the Soviets and to China. As for the remainder, they intend that it shall be absorbed by a ruthless attack on all available export markets. In other words, the main preoccupation of the American Administration in the post-war years will be to export its unemployment outside its own borders by an aggressive export drive in all available markets. The very large increase in the productivity of American industry as a result of war-time technological improvement means that America must export on a hitherto undreamt-of scale. That this also is the policy of the British sectional interests is confirmed by the Government White Paper on Employment Policy. If Britain and America got together to use their political and economic power to share the world's markets, the outlook for the rest of the world, particularly Europe, would be grim indeed. Their only hope would be another war.

Close collaboration based on full mutual confidence between the Soviets and Britain would, on the other hand, make peace a certainty.

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There is much that can be criticised in the Soviet set-up and the way in which it was achieved. Although when one considers realistically the difficulties by which we are faced, even in Britain with its system of parliamentary democracy, in bringing about the transfer of power from the sectional interests to the people, it is obvious that Lenin and his collaborators would have been defeated unless they had ruthlessly liquidated the Russian vested interests. It can also, perhaps, be said that under Stalin the Soviets have, under the pressure of events, departed from the original intentions of the founders of the Soviet Union. It can furthermore be said that political freedom, as we understand it, is largely absent from the Soviet set-up. But when all possible criticisms are made, this fact remains: In the Soviet Union they have discovered a way of identifying the selfish interest of the individual with the interest of the community, so that in working for himself the citizen of the Soviet Union is also working for the community. It is as much to his interest to produce abundance, not scarcity, as it is to the interest of the community. In the Soviet Union the individual has no fear that he and his dependants will want in the midst of plenty. In peace as to-day, in the midst of war, the Soviet citizen is prepared to face the most bitter deprivations because he knows that all suffer alike, and when abundance comes it will be created for the people and not for narrow ruling classes. He knows that once the threat of Hitlerite Germany to the existence of the Soviet Union is removed, and provided antagonistic ruling groups outside Russia can be kept in check, then the whole of the highly efficient Soviet industrial organisation will be devoted to raising the standard of living of the Russian masses. Such is the organisation and the basic ideology on which the Soviets rest that it cannot be used in any other way. Indeed, it is not difficult to prophesy that, having regard to the energy with which every one in Russia works without restriction, within less than five years the standard of living in Russia will be higher than the standard of living in Britain. Within ten years it must exceed the standard of living in the United States, because the Soviets have evolved a system of equating home consumption to maximum production, so that, unlike the U.S.A., there is no need to export the output of a considerable section of the industrial machine, in order to export unemployment outside its own borders.

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Inevitably, therefore, Russian foreign policy must be directed towards two objects: first, it must seek to protect itself from attack by exercising its influence on its European neighbours to put Governments friendly towards Russia into power. Secondly, it must, as long as antagonistic forces rule Britain, seek by every means in its power to neutralise British influence in Europe.

If, however, whole-hearted co-operation between Britain and Russia can be secured, then, to achieve its object of concentrating its energies on building up the standard of living of its own people, the Soviet Union could collaborate fully with Britain to set up democratic governments in Europe, representing the people and not the sectional interests. The way would then be open for breaking down the barriers of nationalism by collaboration under the leadership of the Soviets and Britain to build up the standard of living of the European people. It is the sectional interests and not the people who foster nationalism as the means of preserving and adding to their wealth at the expense of other nations. The people of Europe have the same desire as the British masses: freedom from want, the end of war, and reasonable opportunities of steadily improving their standard of living by their own work.

Thus out of close collaboration based on compatible mutual aims between the Soviet Union and Britain under a Government of the Left would appear in Europe the basis for an International Organisation genuinely devoted to the cause of peace and with the authority to settle disputes between the European nations by discussion and arbitration instead of force.

A Government of the Left in Britain would also revitalise the British Empire which, under the Tory Dictatorship, the policy of "What we have we hold", and the non-application of the Atlantic Charter, has reached a point of frustration. A policy of deliberately setting out to build up the standard of living of the Colonial peoples to our own standard would turn the Colonial Empire into a world-wide federation working closely together for peace. It would also provide a market not only for the exports of this country, necessary to pay for raw materials and equatorial produce, but also a market for absorbing the industrial exports of Europe as well.

A Government of the Left in Britain, too, would help India on her way not only to political freedom, but to broad economic

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progress as well. A large market for our heavy industries would be created in India if we set out to help India to build up her basic industries in the shortest possible time. In doing this we would save India from the experience of Russia in having to pay almost too high a price in human misery in order to build up her basic industries by her own exertions.

A democratic Europe based on Anglo-Soviet collaboration combined with a federation of the free peoples of the Empire would ensure peace for many generations to come. Such a combination would neutralise the explosive possibilities inherent in the determination of the United States to seek its salvation in a return to unrestricted private enterprise. Indeed, those elements in the United States which see the solution of their internal problems in a substantial contribution towards building up the standard of living of backward peoples, would have their hands strengthened perhaps enough to dominate the foreign policies of the State Department. It would certainly bring the people of the United States to our side, because their reluctance to come to terms with Britain is based on their keen realisation of the aggressiveness of the British ruling classes of which the American people, after all, were the first victims.

If the people want to use the power of the State to end war, to secure equal opportunity for every human being to fulfil his individuality, social security, the certainty of a job, a rising standard of living, the start must be to drive the Tories from office by voting against them.

But that is not enough. Who are the people to vote for instead? While the people of this country are overwhelmingly anti-Tory and Left-minded, they are definitely not Labour party, Liberal party, nor Common Wealth party-minded. Neither Labour, Liberal nor Common Wealth as individual parties inspire either themselves or the people with that sense of urgency, power and confidence required to win the next General Election. The reason is clear. While the people are insistent upon vigorous progressive policies and are overwhelmingly anti-Tory, as a whole they are in a state of political suspense. The most politically conscious are already identified with definite groups ranging from the Labour party, through Radical Liberalism to Common Wealth and the Communist party. All these groups have one marked feature in common. Although fiercely partisan

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to their own group fidelities, not one of them really believes it can achieve power alone. Without exception they are frustrated by their sense of impotence and they look—even many members of the Labour party—with decreasing hope to the Labour party for inspired leadership. While they are sympathetic to the aims and aspirations of the Trade Union rank and file, they fear the domination of the Labour party by the Trade Union bureaucracy which has made the leadership of the Labour party so ineffectual.

That these fears are well grounded is borne out by Harold Laski, the present Vice-Chairman of the Labour party. He says:

“There were Labour Governments in Great Britain in 1924 and 1929; neither of them even dreamed that socialist transformation of society was open to it. And, no less important, when the Labour party was in opposition, its main concern was less to fight for its principles as Parnell, for example, had shown that the Parliamentary system could be used to compel new orientations, than to establish a reputation for safety and soundness with the very sections of the population which had a vested interest in the defeat of socialism.

“What is true of the Labour party in Parliament is true also of the Trade Union leaders from whose outlook its main ethos derived. Before 1914, their outlook was geared to that of the working class from which they came. Their habits of mind, their ambitions, both political and economic, were set in a working-class frame; and their wives and children did not dream of a future outside the working class. After 1919 the Trade Union leaders were essentially the civil service of the Trade Unions; their contact with their members was a contact in office hours. Their social life was on a plane largely defined by the employers with whom they negotiated. Their wives lived the typical life of the middle-class bourgeoisie of the suburbs; and their children went from the universities into the ordinary professional careers. They even resented the growth of a socialist membership in the Labour party which was not rooted in the Trade Unions they controlled; and they rarely suspected that a change in the character of capitalist organisation demanded a proportionate adjustment of Trade Union organisation. By the outbreak of the second World War they found it easier to maintain good relations with the civil servants of the bourgeois state than to adjust their outlook to that of those among their own members who thought it the central mission of the working class to advance to the possession of political power.”

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While the Trade Union rank and file are genuinely socialistic, the Trade Union bureaucracy is syndicalist in outlook and seeks to carry through a deal with big business whereby industry would govern itself at the expense of the community.

What of the Liberal party? One section of the Liberal party left the second National Government on the question of the Ottawa Conference and free trade, while the other section, under Simon, remained in the Government. While this split removed from the Independent Liberal party a substantial Whig element that was more concerned with preserving the privileges of wealth than with furthering the interests of the people, it still left inside the Independent Liberal party a strong element which combines with traditional free trade ideas a vested interest in unrestricted capitalism, as well as those radical elements that were prepared to accept a large measure of collectivisation as a means towards further social progress.

The Independent Liberal party, now under the leadership of Sinclair instead of Samuel, has fought a consistent battle to preserve individual freedom, as well as offering a courageous front against Chamberlain's disastrous foreign policy, but it has, because of the fundamental divergence in principle between the Whigs and the Radicals, failed to establish itself as the leader of those political elements in the country that demand a party pledged to bring about a transfer of power to the people as opposed to the protection of sectional interests by the Tory party and the Labour party dominated by the Trade Union hierarchy.

Slessor's comment upon the present position of the Independent Liberal party is just:

"In September 1942, notwithstanding their participation in the War Government, the Liberals at their Assembly carried a resolution endorsing a specific programme entitled 'The Liberal Goal'. It is very similar in scope and intention to the formulations of Mr. Ramsay Muir; while refusing to commit itself to anything like Socialism—there is no demand even for national control of monopolies or trusts—yet the Liberal party wished to use the State 'to do whatever is necessary to overcome the evils of ignorance, squalor, idleness and want'. There is proposed an 'Economic General Staff to advise the Cabinet on economic problems'—it will be observed that no direct powers are to be accorded to the State as such over the conduct

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of industry—indeed, anything like a ‘planned national economy’ is ‘utterly opposed’. For the rest, the programme supports a social order in which ‘there shall be neither poverty nor privilege’. Believing that the paramount test of all policy must be a moral one, it repudiates ‘unbridled individualism and the tyranny of collectivism’. It would appear that no specific remedies to cope with after-war confusion are envisaged.

“This economy of detail may be wise, but at the same time it is likely that the electorate will demand some guidance other than that of abstract aspiration. Already a significant drift away from the party has been disclosed in the departure of Sir Richard Acland to form his Common Wealth party—one which directly attacks the holding of property for purposes of individual exploitation—and seats have been won for his cause which would scarcely have gone to Liberalism. Mr. Quintin Hogg and his school of young Tories have produced a policy which, while preserving the essential features of capitalism, is far more concrete in its specific remedies for social maladjustments. Indeed, compared with these pronouncements and the complementary ones of the Labour party, there is an academic and aloof atmosphere about the current publications of Liberalism which make them appear to be more suited to study circles and places of ethical improvement than to those demands which the consequence of protracted modern warfare are likely to impose upon future government and administration.”

In its official policies the Liberal party so far has failed to live up to Lord Lothian’s prophecy made to Stalin in 1931, when he “explained the plight of the Liberal intelligentsia in England, where the remnant of the party had divided, the Right wing joining the Conservative and its Left wandering in the wilderness, because it could not join the Labour Opposition, which was not up to its level in statesmanship. It was the only body capable of establishing a really scientific communism in the West, and this aim must carry it to the Left of the Labour party as a new factor in British politics.”

Nevertheless, just as in the Labour party there are strong Radical Socialist elements, so in the Liberal party there is a powerful Radical Liberal element in Radical Action, which seeks to bring back the Liberal party to the Radical outlook of 1906.

Whether one accepts Gladstone’s definition of a Radical as

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"a Liberal who is in earnest" or prefers the American definition: "A Liberal is one who believes in social evolution but won't lift a finger to help it, whereas a Radical is one who believes in social evolution and is prepared to have a revolution to achieve it", the duty of Radical Liberals, as Radical Action realises, is to fight Tory despotism with all its strength so that the power of the State is used to build a Britain fit for ordinary decent people to live in by ensuring jobs for all, the end of poverty, equality of opportunity, decent houses for all, and the end of war.

Clearly neither the Labour nor the Liberal party can win the next General Election on its own.

For the Labour leadership to tell members of other groups that they must join the Labour party as individuals and try to influence it from within becomes under these conditions the negation of leadership. What must be recognised by the Labour and Liberal parties, just as much as by the other Left groups, is that while the people of this country to-day are predominantly Left-minded, they have confidence in none of the Left parties as individual groups. We are therefore still in the era of Coalition Governments that began with the First National Government, and it will necessarily be some years before Party government is resumed.

The British people and their political leaders are therefore faced by two alternatives in the immediate post-war years. Either they accept a continuance of a Coalition of the Right, based on the Tory party; or they make the necessary arrangements to bring into being, at the next General Election, a Coalition of the Left, which will accurately mirror the Left-mindedness of the people.

The history of the misdeeds of the Tory-dominated Coalition which has been in power since 1931 proves that to work for a Tory-dominated Coalition after the war will lead straight to disaster. Every man and woman, every politician, who wishes to build a Britain fit for ordinary decent people to live in, must, if he is honest in his professions, work all out to create a Coalition of the Left to fight the Coalition of the Right under which the Tory party will fight the next General Election.

Some Labour party leaders advise their members to have nothing to do with the Liberal party or Common Wealth, as they are suspect. If the Labour party follows this advice and

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fights the next General Election without a Coalition of the Left, it will produce no violent impact upon the psychology of the people. As a result, the Labour party will be returned with either too small a majority on which to have an effective Labour Government, or it will be in a minority. Then the Labour leaders will be forced, in order to share in power, to participate after the General Election in another Coalition with the Tories. Such a Coalition the people would rightly regard as the ultimate betrayal. The cynicism engendered would destroy the hold of the Labour party over the working classes. It would also in all probability result in the destruction of our Parliamentary democracy, and the victory of the British brand of Fascism. Indeed, the refusal of the Labour party leadership to have a Coalition of the Left could only be regarded as a refusal on their part to accept the responsibility of power, because a Coalition of the Left must inevitably be dominated by the Labour party, just as a Coalition of the Right must be dominated by the Tory party.

Liberals and others who wish to avoid a Coalition of the Left, as long as the Labour party is dominated by the Trade Union bureaucracy instead of the Trade Union rank and file, because they rightly realise the grave implications inherent in the syndicalism of the bureaucracy must reconsider their attitude. While there are not wanting signs that the transfer of power inside the Labour party from the Trade Union bureaucracy to the rank and file is beginning to take place, the process cannot be rapid. The necessity of defeating the Tory party at the next General Election is too urgent to await the completion of this process before participating in a Coalition of the Left.

What does matter to every Radical Liberal is that the Tory party should be defeated so that the power of the State may be used to build the Britain for which Radical Liberals have fought ever since the opening years of this century, a Britain fit for ordinary people to live in. In preparing a common programme and entering into an electoral arrangement with the other groups of the Left, Liberals would not lose their separate identity, any more than would the other groups. Each would be a tributary flowing into and swelling the majestic flow of the Coalition of the Left towards victory. Indeed, in the present state of the Labour party, it would be a disaster for the people and for the

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Left-minded parties if they failed to march forward in the same procession but under their own banners. By preserving their separate identity and at the same time collaborating in a Coalition of the Left, the Liberal party would provide a powerful check upon any syndicalist tendencies of the Trade Union bureaucracy and in fact would contribute to their speedy defeat by the Trade Union rank and file.

In spite of surface appearances, there are, I believe, possibilities of agreement between the leaders of the parties to bring about a Coalition of the Left to fight the next General Election. For the leadership of the Left parties to fail to make such an arrangement would prove their spiritual unreadiness for power. Should the leadership be spiritually unprepared for power, the situation is far from hopeless. The strong Radical elements in the Labour and the Liberal parties will, I am sure, realise their responsibility to make constituency arrangements to defeat the Tories which will prepare the ground for the leaders to come together at a later stage. In this way Britain and the world will be preserved from the unmitigated disaster of a further period of Tory rule.

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PENGUIN SPECIALS



Howard Coster

THE AUTHOR

T. L. HORABIN was elected Radical-Liberal Member of Parliament for North Cornwall after a bitterly contested by-election in July 1939. The issue at the by-election was the Tory policy of a free hand for the Axis dictators in Europe. Horabin had no hesitation during the course of the Election in saying that Chamberlain had done more harm to the world than Hitler, on the grounds that the man who lets the mad bull out of the field to run amok is more responsible than the bull for the damage done. He doubled his predecessor's majority. In the House of Commons he has consistently criticised the war effort of both the Chamberlain and the Churchill administrations on the grounds of its inadequacy. Educated at Cardiff High School. Started life as a Civil Servant and later became a Business Consultant. Served in last war in Artists' Rifles and Cameron Highlanders. Married, has a daughter still at school and two sons serving in this war.